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胡壮麟、刘润清、李延福等同志编的《语言学教程》(英文)的出版,标志着中国外语教育界对语言学这一学科的重视。几位编者广泛取材,多方征求意见,反复修改,工作可谓扎扎实实。近年来,国内外语同行已出过结合不同语种的语言学入门教程五六种。本书出版不算早,但范围扩大了,信息增加了;再过两三年,还有针对师范专业和科技专业的同类教材编印出来;与此同时,我国外语院系所开语言学课程除普通语言学之外,还有社会语言学、心理语言学、应用语言学、音系学、句法学、语用学、文体学等课程;这一切又标志着语言诸学科在中国外语界的兴起。在五十年代,曾引进语言史、词汇学、理论语法、风格论等课程,但比起现在所开设的语言学课程,前者多半是表层语言现象的概括,属于语文学的范围,后者更着重语言理论的阐发,属于现代语言学的范围。看到这一改革,我们不妨说语言学课程的开设,又标志着中国外语教育的一个方面在现代化的道路上迈出了一步。

但是,现代化的目标不能停止在引进上。这一点,国内外语教材的改革颇有点像国内工业生产的改革:都忙于引进,说不上自创。不过外语界引进的是理论,而工业界引进的是成套设备,是硬件。况且,外语界具有读懂外国理论的外语条件和验证理论的教学环境,因此应该是有利的。

但是,我们觉得有必要从“引进”走到“自创”,其条件是:

1. 引进的理论,能用汉语说得清,讲得懂;能用汉语的例证加以测验。
2. 凡有可能,不妨采用现场工作法。我国社会语言学、心理语言学和测试学研究者已做出榜样,值得学习。

3. 凡在汉语诸范畴中验证外国某一理论,其有解释力者肯定之,其解释力不强或不具解释力者指出之,其主观臆测者直言之,不以权威而护短,不以宗师而慑服。

4. 尊重我所不懂或不明白价值所在理论,不以有用无用、正统邪说为取与舍的标准。对理论有矢志不渝的精神,理解深,教得熟,力求贯通,比较,自创。

5. 汉语研究者中的前辈已经做出的自创,外语系出身的研究者应该认真读,读懂,直至应用到自己的研究工作。

写以上,为了自勉,也与国内同行共勉。

王宗炎 许国璋

1987年10月

前 言

自五十年代末,西方国家在语言学领域新说纷出,建树颇多,其影响遍及心理学、社会学、教育学、人类学、通信技术等学科。从此各大学相继设立语言学系,培养专业人才。由于种种原因,这门学科的意义似乎还没有引起我国语言学界的足够重视。尽管如此,自1980年以来,国内已有较多院校的英语专业陆续开出以英语讲授的各种语言学课程,最普遍的首推“普通语言学”和“语言学导论”。为此,1984年高等院校英语专业高年级教学讨论会提出的教学试行方案,建议把英语语言学作为英语本科的必修课程。考虑到国外教材无法大批量引进,且内容并不完全适用,有的过于深奥,有的举例较偏,有的缺少练习。根据国外现有材料,整理编写一部适用于我国英语专业学生需要的教材势在必行。正是在此形势下,我们联合起来,共同编写此《语言学教程》。在编写过程中参考引用较多的语言学教材有: M. Alyeshmorni and P. Taubr (1975), D. Bolinger (1958), D. Crystal (1980), F.P. Dinneen (1967), V. Fromkin and R. Rodman (1983), H.A. Gleason (1961), C.W. Hayes, et al. (1977), A.A. Hill (1969), C.F. Hockett (1958), J. Lyons (1981), Lim Kiat Boey (1975), N. Minnis (1973), J. Richards et al (1985), R.H. Robins (1971), J.M.Y. Simpson (1972), R. Wardhaugh (1972)。

编写本书的指导原则是:(1)以英语专业高年级学生为主要对象,也可供英语专业的研究生使用。(2)用英语编写,尽可能选用英语例句。(3)在内容上,既要传授基本知识,也要反映语言学中的最新发展。(4)在观点上,不拘泥于一派之说。(5)讲授本书内容时可详可简,授课教师可根据自己学校的教学方案和学生程

度进行调整。

根据上述思想,全书正篇十六章,可分成两大部分。一至九章为第一部分,介绍语言起源及内部各层次;十至十六章为第二部分,讲授语言在时空中的变异及其与思维、文化、社会、语境、文学等外部因素的关系。此外,尚有两个附录,分别讨论语言学与教学的关系和当代语言学中的重要流派。考虑到相当一部分英语专业学生毕业后直接从事英语教学工作或拟进一步攻读硕士学位,附录的内容对他们会有帮助。

本书每章包括课文、练习和参考文献,书目左上端有星号者也为推荐阅读书目。全书末尾附有词条译名和索引,便于读者查阅。

先后参加本书编写工作的有北京大学胡壮麟(第五、六、七、九、十和十四章),姜望琪(第三、四章)和高一虹(附录I),北京外语学院刘润清(第十五章和附录II)和郭健生(第十三章13.1~13.2.1和十五章)、对外经济贸易大学黄震华(第八和十六章)、杨潮光(第十一章)和慈继伟(第十三章13.2.2—13.3.3),山东大学李延福(第一和二章),聊城师范学院张德录(第十二章)。

本书曾受到国内专家和同行的指导和帮助。在初稿写成后,承蒙中山大学王宗炎教授、北京师范大学伍铁平教授、中国社会科学院语言研究所赵世开研究员、对外经济贸易大学廖雅章教授给以热情鼓励并提出宝贵意见。

经国家教委外语教材编审委员会英语组安排,担任本书主审工作的为北京外语学院许国璋教授和广州外语学院桂诗春教授,审稿会召集人为山东大学吴富恒教授。参加审稿会的尚有山东大学张健教授,厦门大学黄希哲副教授,西安外语学院黄浩枢副教授,上海外语学院何兆熊副教授,山东师范大学马传喜副教授和曲阜师范学院王守元副教授。1986年10月,在山东大学召开了审稿会,会后由主编统纂定稿。本书在内容和编写上未必能尽如人意,不当之处,恳切期望国内专家同行和读者惠予批评指正。

编 者 1987年2月,于北京

CONTENTS

1. The Nature of Language	1
1.1 What does “language” mean?.....	2
1.2 What is language?.....	3
1.3 Design features.....	4
1.3.1 Arbitrariness	4
1.3.2 Duality	6
1.3.3 Productivity	6
1.3.4 Displacement	7
1.3.5 Cultural transmission	8
1.3.6 Interchangeability.	8
1.4 Functions of language	10
1.4.1 Phatic	10
1.4.2 Directive	10
1.4.3 Informative	11
1.4.4 Interrogative	11
1.4.5 Expressive	12
1.4.6 Evocative	12
1.4.7 Performative	13
1.5 The origin of language	13
1.5.1 The divine-origin theory	14

1.5.2	The invention theory.....	15
1.5.3	The evolutionary theory	15
1.5.4	The first language	16
2.	What is Linguistics?.....	20
2.1	What is linguistics	20
2.2	Some basic distinctions in linguistics	22
2.2.1	Speech and writing	23
2.2.2	Descriptive or prescriptive?	24
2.2.3	Synchronic and diachronic studies.....	25
2.2.4	Langue and parole	27
2.2.5	Competence and performance	28
2.2.6	Linguistic potential and actual linguistic behaviour	29
2.3	Major branches of general linguistics	30
2.3.1	Phonetics	30
2.3.2	Phonology	31
2.3.3	Morphology	31
2.3.4	Syntax	31
2.3.5	Semantics	32
2.4	Uses of linguistics.....	32
2.4.1	Linguistics and language teaching	32
2.4.2	Linguistics and society.....	33
2.4.3	Linguistics and literature.	34
2.4.4	Linguistics and psychology.....	34

2.4.5	Some other applications.....	35
3.	Phonetics	39
3.1	Scope of phonetics	39
3.1.1	Articulatory phonetics	39
3.1.2	Auditory phonetics	39
3.1.3	Acoustic phonetics.....	40
3.2	The vocal organs	40
3.2.1	The initiator of the air-stream	40
3.2.2	The vocal cords.....	41
3.2.3	The resonating cavities.....	43
3.3	Consonants	46
3.3.1	Places of articulation	46
3.3.2	Manners of articulation	48
3.3.3	The classification of consonants	51
3.4	Vowels	52
3.4.1	Cardinal vowels.....	53
3.4.2	The classification of vowels	54
3.5	Phonetic transcription	57
3.5.1	The International Phonetic Alphabet	58
3.5.2	Narrow and Broad Transcriptions	59
4.	Phonology	64
4.1	Distinctiveness in speech sounds	64
4.2	The phoneme theory	65
4.2.1	Minimal pairs.....	65

4.2.2	Free variation	66
4.2.3	Complementary distribution	65
4.2.4	Phonemic similarity	67
4.2.5	Pattern congruity	68
4.3	A functional approach.....	69
4.3.1	Neutralization and archiphoneme.....	69
4.3.2	Distinctive features.....	70
4.4	Suprasegmental phonology	71
4.4.1	The syllable.....	72
4.4.2	Stress	73
4.4.3	Pitch	76
4.4.4	Intonation.....	77
5.	Morphology	83
5.1	Morphology	83
5.1.1	Inflection	83
5.1.2	Word-formation	84
5.2	Word and morpheme.....	87
5.2.1	Morpheme	87
5.2.2	Morpheme and phoneme.....	87
5.2.3	Morphemic structure and phonological structure	88
5.2.4	Allomorph	88
5.3	Types of morphemes	90
5.3.1	Free morpheme and bound morpheme	90

5.3.2	Roots.....	90
5.3.3	Affix	91
5.3.4	Root and stem.....	92
5.4	Morphophonology and morphophonemics.....	93
5.4.1	Phonologically conditioned	93
5.4.2	Morphologically conditioned	94
6.	Lexicon.....	97
6.1	Lexicon	97
6.2	Word	97
6.2.1	Three senses of “word”	97
6.2.2	The identification of words.....	99
6.2.3	Subclassification of words	101
6.2.4	Lexeme	105
6.3	Idiom.....	106
6.3.1	Two basic requirements.....	106
6.3.2	Factors which account for the formation of idioms	108
6.3.3	Application of idioms	109
6.4	Collocation.....	110
6.4.1	Mutual expectancy	110
6.4.2	Fixed syntactic-lexical relations	110
6.4.3	Inexplicability	111
7.	Syntax	114
7.1	Syntactic relations	114

7.1.1	Positional relation	114
7.1.2	Relation of substitutability	115
7.1.3	Relation of co-occurrence.....	116
7.2	Construction and constituent	116
7.2.1	Construction	116
7.2.2	Immediate constituent.....	117
7.2.3	Endocentric and exocentric constructions...	118
7.2.4	Coordinate and subordinate constructions...	120
7.3	Syntactic function.....	121
7.3.1	Subject....	121
7.3.2	Predicate.	123
7.3.3	Object	124
7.3.4	The relation between classes and functions...	125
7.4	Category	125
7.4.1	Number	126
7.4.2	Gender	126
7.4.3	Case.....	127
7.4.4	Concord	128
7.4.5	Government	128
7.5	Phrase, clause and sentence	129
7.5.1	Phrase	129
7.5.2	Clause	129
7.5.3	Sentence	130
7.6	The extension of sentence.....	132
7.6.1	Conjoining	132

7.6.2	Embedding.....	132
7.6.3	Recursiveness.....	132
7.6.4	Hypotactic and paratactic.....	133
7.7	Syntax beyond the sentence.....	133
7.7.1	Sentential connection.....	134
7.7.2	Cohesion.....	134
8.	Semantics	139
8.1	What is semantics?.....	139
8.2	What is meaning?	139
8.2.1	The realist vs the nominalist.....	140
8.2.2	Conceptualism or mentalism.....	140
8.2.3	Mechanism.....	141
8.2.4	Contextualism.....	141
8.2.5	Behaviourism	142
8.2.6	Functionalism.....	142
8.3	Kinds of meaning	143
8.3.1	The traditional approach	143
8.3.2	The functional approach	143
8.3.3	The pragmatic approach	144
8.4	Sense relationships	144
8.4.1	Synonymy	145
8.4.2	Antonymy	146
8.4.3	Hyponymy	148
8.4.4	Polysomy and homonymy.....	149

8.4.5	Sense relations between sentences	150
8.5	Semantic analysis.....	153
8.5.1	Componential analysis	153
8.5.2	Predication analysis	155
8.5.3	Relational components	156
8.5.4	Logical elements	157
9.	Writing	162
9.1	The growth of writing	162
9.1.1	The iconic stage	162
9.1.2	Word writing	162
9.1.3	Syllabic writing.....	164
9.1.4	Sound writing	164
9.2	The writing systems	165
9.2.1	Word writing system.....	165
9.2.2	Syllabic writing system.....	166
9.2.3	Sound writing system	166
9.3	Graphemics	167
9.3.1	Graphemes.....	167
9.3.2	Reference	168
9.4	Writing and speech	168
9.4.1	The graphemic system and the phonological system	168
9.4.2	Variation in graphemic representation	170
9.4.3	The influence of one writing system on	

another	170
9.4.4 The disparity between speech and writing ...	171
9.4.5 The importance of writing	172
10. Language Variation	175
10.1 The changing language.....	175
10.2 Lexical change	175
10.2.1 Invention	176
10.2.2 Compounding	176
10.2.3 Blending	177
10.2.4 Abbreviation	178
10.2.5 Acronym.....	178
10.2.6 Metanalysis.....	179
10.2.7 Back-formation	180
10.2.8 Analogical creation	180
10.2.9 Borrowing	181
10.3 Phonological change	183
10.3.1 Loss.....	183
10.3.2 Addition.....	184
10.3.3 Metathesis	185
10.3.4 Assimilation	185
10.3.5 Dissimilation	186
10.4 Grammatical change	186
10.4.1 Morphological change	186
10.4.2 Syntactical change	187

10.5	Semantic change.....	188
10.5.1	Broadening.....	189
10.5.2	Narrowing	190
10.5.3	Meaning shift	190
10.5.4	Class shift	191
10.5.5	Folk etymology	191
10.6	Orthographic change.....	192
11.	Varieties of Language	196
11.1	English or Englishes?	196
11.2	Dialect	197
11.2.1	Regional dialect	197
11.2.2	Temporal dialect	198
11.2.3	Social dialect	199
11.2.4	Standard dialect	204
11.2.5	Idelect	205
11.2.6	Categorization of dialectal varieties.....	206
11.3	Register.....	206
11.3.1	Field of discourse	207
11.3.2	Mode of discourse	208
11.3.3	Tenor of discourse	209
11.3.4	Categorization of diatypic varieties	209
11.4	Discourse	210
12.	Linguistic Comparison	215
12.1	Comparative and historical linguistics.....	215

14.1.1	Internal authority.....	254
14.1.2	External authority	255
14.2	Language planning	255
14.2.1	The standard language	256
14.2.2	The national language	257
14.2.3	The official language	259
14.3	The interrelation between language and society...	260
14.3.1	Roles	260
14.3.2	Reputations	261
14.3.3	Domain	262
14.3.4	Communication codes.....	262
14.3.5	Code-switching	263
14.3.6	Language maintenance	263
14.4	The role of dictionaries and grammars as a social force	263
14.4.1	Dictionaries	263
14.4.2	Grammars	264
15. Pragmatics		269
15.1	Introduction.....	269
15.2	Context and meaning	270
15.3	Speech act theory	271
15.3.1	Illocutionary acts.....	273
15.3.2	Types of illocutionary acts	274
15.3.3	Indirect speech acts.....	275

15.3.4	Difficulties in speech act theory	277
15.4	Conversational analysis	278
15.4.1	Adjacency pairs.....	278
15.4.2	Preferred second parts	279
15.4.3	Presequences	281
15.5	The Cooperative Principle(CP)	282
15.5.1	The cooperative principle and its Maxims	282
15.5.2	Conversational implicatures	283
15.5.3	Licensing violations of the Maxims.....	285
16.	Linguistics and Literature.....	291
16.1	The function of linguistics in the study of literature	291
16.2	A method of linguistic analysis.....	293
16.2.1	Phonological features	293
16.2.2	Lexical features.....	295
16.2.3	Grammatical features	296
16.2.4	Semantic features.....	298
16.2.5	Graphological features	301
16.3	The theory of foregrounding.....	303
16.3.1	Deviation	303
16.3.2	Parallelism	305
16.3.3	Patterning	306
16.4	Stylistic Variants	307

Appendix I. Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching ...	313
1.1 The relation of linguistics to foreign language teaching.....	313
1.2 Various linguistic views and their significance in FL learning and teaching.....	315
1.2.1 Traditional grammars	315
1.2.2 Structuralist linguistics	316
1.2.3 Transformational-Generative linguistics	316
1.2.4 Functional linguistics	317
1.2.5 The theory of communicative competence...	318
1.3 Syllabus design	319
1.3.1 What is syllabus?	319
1.3.2 Major factors in syllabus design	320
1.3.3 Types of syllabus	321
1.4 Error analysis	329
1.4.1 Errors, mistakes, and error analysis	329
1.4.2 Attitudes to errors	330
1.4.3 Procedure of error analysis	331
1.4.4 Contrastive analysis and non-contrastive analysis	332
1.5 Testing	334
1.5.1 Two different approaches to testing	335
1.5.2 Types of test	336
1.5.3 Requirements of a good test.....	337
1.5.4 Test content and test form	340
1.5.5 Marking and interpretation of scores.....	341

I.6 Summary	343
Appendix II. Modern Linguistic Schools and Theories	350
II.1 Ferdinand de Saussure	350
II.1.1 Nature of the linguistic sign.....	350
II.1.2 The relational nature of language units.....	352
II.1.3 Langue and parole.....	354
II.1.4 The relation between diachronic and synchronic studies	356
II.2 The Prague School	358
II.2.1 Introduction	358
II.2.2 Phonological oppositions	360
II.2.3 Functional sentence perspective (FSP)	362
II.3 American structuralism	365
II.3.1 Introduction	365
II.3.2 Structural grammar	367
II.3.3 Behaviourist psychology in structuralism...	370
II.3.4 A comparison between traditional and structural grammars.....	371
II.4 Transformational-Generative grammar.....	372
II.4.1 Introduction	372
II.4.2 Chomsky's innateness hypothesis	374
II.4.3 Phrase structure rules	377
II.4.4 Transformational rules	379
II.4.5 A comparison between structural grammar	

and TG grammar	383
II.5 The London School	384
II.5.1 Introduction	384
II.5.2 Malinowski's theory of meaning.....	385
II.5.3 Firth's theory of meaning	386
II.5.4 Halliday's systemic grammar	388
II.5.5 Halliday's functional grammar	393
Index (with Chinese translation)	398

1. THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

We use language every day. We live in a world of words. Hardly any moment passes without someone talking, writing, or reading. Indeed, language is most essential to mankind. Our lives increasingly depend on fast and successful use of language. Today, even machines are "learning" to use language. Strangely enough, we know more about things around us (the sun, the moon, the air, etc.) than things in ourselves. For example, language is central to our nature as human beings, for it is the possession of language that distinguishes humans from animals. However, we do not know yet how exactly we acquire language and how it is possible for us to perceive through language; nor do we understand precisely the relationships between language and thought, language and logic, or language and culture; still less do we know how and when language originated. One reason for this inadequate knowledge of language is that we as language users take too many things for granted. Language comes to every normal person so naturally that few of us need stop and question what language is, much less do we feel the necessity to study it. As we shall see in the course of this book, language is far more complex than most people have probably imagined and the necessity to study it is far greater than some people may have assumed. Linguistics is a branch of science which takes language as its object of investigation. It will be proper to have a good idea from the outset about the nature of the object of our study.

1.1 What does “language” mean?

Not many people would stop and think what meanings the ordinary word “language” has. In fact, it involves several different senses which we need to distinguish in linguistics.

First, language can mean what a person says or said, as in “*What he said sounds reasonable enough, but he expressed himself in such bad language that many people misunderstood him*”. In this sense, “language” simply refers to the concrete act of speaking in a given situation, or the expression one uses in speech in one instance.

Secondly, a person does not speak in a particular way only on one occasion, he often has a consistent way of speaking or writing. So “language” is sometimes used to refer to the whole of a person’s language, as in “*Shakespeare’s language*”, “*Lu Xun’s language*”, or “*Faulkner’s language*”. In this case, it is an individual’s personal dialect called idiolect.

Thirdly, “language” also means a particular variety or level of speech or writing, such as “*scientific language*”, or “*language for special purposes*”, “*English for special purposes*”, “*trade language*”, “*formal language*”, “*colloquial language*”, and others.

Fourthly, when we speak of “*the English language*”, “*the Chinese language*”, or “*first language*”, we are using “language” to refer to the abstract system underlying the totality of the speech/writing behaviour of a community. It refers to everything in a language system (its pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, writing system, etc) that makes it different from any other systems. This is what we mean when we say “*Do you know French?*”

Finally, there is an even more abstract sense of “language”, referring to the common features of all human languages. It

means a defining feature of human language behaviour as contrasted with animal systems of communication, or any artificial language. When we say "*He studies language*", we mean he studies the universal properties of all speech/writing systems, not just **one** particular language.

1.2 What is language?

What is language? This may sound like a naive question. Yet, to this extremely familiar phenomenon, it is very difficult to give a satisfactory definition. We may say "*language is a tool for human communication*". But that does not say anything about its defining properties, only about its function, and there are many other systems (secret codes, traffic signals, for example) performing the same function. We may say "*language is a set of rules*"; again that says nothing about its function, and there are other systems containing sets of rules.

However, linguists are in broad agreement about some of the important characteristics of human language, and most of them would accept a tentative definition like the following: **Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication.** This does not appear to be very original at first sight, but each word in it has been chosen with care to capture an important aspect of language. For example, language must be a **system**, since elements in it are arranged according to certain rules; they can not be combined at will. In English, "*bkli*" will not be a possible word; "*He table a green*" will not be an acceptable sentence. If language were not systematic, it could not be learned or used consistently. Language is **arbitrary** in the sense that there is no intrinsic connection between the word *pen* and the thing we use

to write with. The fact that different languages have different words for it (*bi* in Chinese for instance) speaks strongly for the arbitrary nature of language. This also explains the **symbolic** nature of language: words are associated with objects, actions, ideas by convention. This is why some people say “*A rose by any other name would smell as sweet*” (see further 1.3.1). We say language is vocal because the primary medium is sound for all languages, no matter how well developed are their writing systems. All evidence shows that writing systems came much later than the spoken forms and that they are only attempts to capture sounds and meaning on paper. The fact that children acquire spoken language first before they can read or write also indicates that language is primarily vocal. The term “human” in the definition is meant to specify that language is human-specific; that is, it is very different from the communication systems other forms of life possess (such as bird songs and animal cries) (see 1.3). This brings us to a question of great interest: In what ways are human languages different from systems of nonhuman communication? The next section explores the differences, and in the course of discussion the nature of language will be made clearer.

1.3 Design Features

Design features refer to the defining properties of human language that distinguish it from any animal system of communication. By comparing language with animal communication systems, we get a better understanding of the nature of language.

1.3.1 Arbitrariness

As mentioned earlier, by “language is arbitrary”, we mean

that there is no logical connection between meanings and sounds. There is no reason why we should use the sounds/*dog*/ to denote the animal “*dog*”, or /*pig*/ to refer to the animal “*pig*”. Chinese speakers use different sounds (*gou* and *zhu* respectively) to indicate them. However, language is not entirely arbitrary; there are cases where there seems to be some association between sounds and meaning. First, there are certain words in every language which imitate natural sounds, such as *bang*, *crash*, and *roar* in English, *dingdang* (叮当) *kacha* (喀嚓) *putong* (扑通) in Chinese. These words are somewhat motivated. But they only make up a small percentage of the vocabulary in a language. They are called onomatopoeic words. Secondly, some compound words are not entirely arbitrary; there is a certain connection between their sounds and meaning. Since there already exist the words “*type*” and “*writer*”, for example, the machine we type our papers on is called “*typewriter*”. The reason for the name is obvious. Words like “*tractordriver*”, “*shoe-maker*”, and “*air-conditioner*” are not so arbitrary.

The arbitrary nature of language is a sign of sophistication and this makes it possible for language to have unlimited sources of expression. As far as we know, no nonhuman communication system is arbitrary in the sense we have discussed. Some people have attempted to suggest that the bee dance is somewhat arbitrary. A bee, upon returning to the hive, tells other bees where a source of food is located by performing a dance on a wall of the hive that shows the direction, location, distance and quality of the food source. Basically, the bee makes an angle in the dance which is the same angle as the food source is from the sun. The number of repetitions per minute of the basic pattern of the dance indicates the distance of the food source. The angle in dance seems arbi-

trary because it is not the exact direction of the food source. In fact, it is nonarbitrary because, after all, it has some connection with the direction of the sun. The rate of repetition of the dance pattern seems arbitrary in the sense that it cannot be an exact measure of the distance; but actually not. If we interpret it as "the longer it takes to complete the basic pattern, the longer it will take a bee to fly to the source", then this sign is nonarbitrary.

1.3.2 Duality

As it is discussed in section 1.2, language is a system. This system has two sets of structures, one of sounds and the other of meaning. This is important for the workings of language. A small number of sounds can be grouped and regrouped into a large number of units of meaning (words), and the units of meaning can be arranged and rearranged into an infinite number of sentences. Later on in this book, we shall discuss the ways in which sounds can form words, the ways in which words can form sentences, and also how the two systems relate to each other within one overall linguistic system. The nature of this relationship constitutes a most interesting problem. For instance, we make dictionaries of a language, but we cannot make a dictionary of sentences of that language. For the number of words is relatively finite, but the number of sentences is absolutely infinite. This feature of language offers its users the possibility to talk about anything within their knowledge. No animal communication system has duality, or ever comes near to possessing it.

1.3.3 Productivity

Language is productive in the sense that users can understand

and produce sentences they have never heard before. Every day we send messages that have never before been sent and understand novel messages. Much of what we say and hear we say and hear for the first time; yet there seems no problem of understanding. For example, the sentence "*A red-eyed elephant is dancing on the hotel bed*" must be new to all readers of this book and it does not describe a common happening in the world. Nevertheless, nobody has any difficulty in understanding it. Productivity seems peculiar to human language. A gibbon call system, for example, is not productive, for gibbons draw all their calls from a fixed repertoire which is rapidly exhausted, making any novelty impossible. The bee dance, however, does have a limited productivity, as is used to communicate about food sources in **any** direction. But food sources are the only kind of messages that can be sent through the bee dance; bees do not "talk" about themselves, the hives, or wind, let alone about people, animals, hopes or desires.

1.3.4 Displacement

Language can be used to refer to things which are not present: real or imagined matters in the past, present, or future or in far-away places. In other words, language can refer to contexts removed from the immediate situations of the speaker. This is what we mean by "displacement". This property of language provides speakers with an opportunity to talk about a wide range of things, free from the barriers caused by remoteness in time and place. Do animals have displaced communication? No. Animal calls are mainly uttered in response to immediate changes of situation. Calls or cries are produced, say, in contact of food, in presence of danger or in pain. Once the danger or pain is over, calls are

stopped. A gibbon, for example, never utters a call about something he ate last year. There is something special about the bee dance though. Bees communicate to other bees about the food sources they have found when they are no longer in the presence of the food. In this sense, the bee dance has a component of displacement. But this component is very insignificant. For the bees must communicate about the food immediately on returning to the hive. They do not dance about the food they discovered last month nor do they speculate about future discoveries.

1.3.5 Cultural transmission

Animal call systems are genetically transmitted. That is, animals are born with the capacity to produce the set of calls peculiar to their species. All cats, gibbons and bees, for example, have systems which are almost identical to those of all other cats, gibbons and bees. With human beings, things are different: a Chinese speaker and an English speaker are not mutually intelligible. This shows that language is culturally transmitted. That is, it is passed on from one generation to the next by teaching and learning, rather than by instinct. This is not to deny that human capacity for language has a genetic basis; in fact only human beings can learn a human language at birth and he has to be exposed to a language in order to acquire it.

1.3.6 Interchangeability

Interchangeability means that any human being can be both a producer and a receiver of messages. The communication systems of gibbons and bees have this feature, but those of certain other animals do not. For instance some male birds possess calls

which females do not have, and certain kinds of fish have similar sex-restricted types of communication. Their calls and patterns are not interchangeable between the sexes.

These are six major "design features" of human language and the co-presence of these features seems to show that language is human-specific. If so, it should be impossible then to teach any other organism a system which has all these defining properties. There have been some experiments in this respect and the most influential one is probably Project Washoe. Washoe, a female chimpanzee, was reared as if a child by two American psychologists, Beatrice and Alan Gardner. Washoe was exposed to American Sign Language (ASL) as she was reared. ASL is the language used by the deaf community in North America and, according to current opinions, deserves to be regarded as a human language. (It is important to distinguish it from finger spelling which is clearly based on the oral language of the community.) The results of the project were sensational: Washoe began to learn signs and generalize them to new objects in a way characteristic of small children. She also began to combine signs in novel ways, it was claimed, displaying productivity. The Gardners have suggested that she also used sign order as a syntactic device. Many commentators have concluded from all this that Washoe has learned a human language.

However, this is very controversial. Sceptics have pointed to certain facts that go against the hasty conclusion. For instance, Washoe's appropriately combined signs are interspersed with many which are unintelligible. This leads to the suggestion that the appropriate ones were lucky accidents. The claim that Washoe used sign order is weak as she appears to combine signs in many ways, repeat signs a great deal, generally not displaying behaviour resembling

ing that of a child learning its native language.

1.4 Functions of language

Language has to serve various purposes as there are different types of occasions for using it. The infinite number of uses can, however, be reduced to a short list of basic functions. Language has at least seven basic functions: phatic, directive, informative, interrogative, expressive, evocative and performative.

1.4.1 Phatic

The PHATIC function refers to language used for establishing an atmosphere or maintaining social contact rather than for exchanging information or ideas. Greetings, farewells, and comments on the weather serve this function. A sentence like "*A nice day, isn't it?*" does not inform the hearer about the weather, for it is a fact he himself can see. But it does make the hearer feel good because the sentence shows that the relationship between them remains what it was. Similarly, when a person asks "*How are you today?*", he is not really interested in the hearer's state of health, but is expressing good will. Much of the language used for phatic purposes is insincere if taken literally, but to chide it for its insincerity is to miss the point. Useless as phatic language may appear, its importance is immediately shown if it is omitted. If one does not say "*Hello!*" to a friend, the consequence can be at times very serious.

1.4.2 Directive

When language is used to get the hearer do something, it serves a DIRECTIVE function. Most imperative sentences are associated

with this function, as in "*Shut the door*", "*Pass the salt, please*", but there are other forms for this purpose. Sentences like "*You should leave right now*", "*I advise you not to do it*", "*You ought to finish it in time*" all have an obviously directive function. There are also sentences, such as "*If I were you, I would take it*", which can be taken as directive, though their force is very weak. The directive use of language does not necessarily always disadvantage the hearer; in many cases it brings benefit to him. In making offers (as in "*Have a seat*", "*Do have another sandwich*"), or issuing invitations (as in "*Do come in, please*", "*Drop in whenever you are free*"), language performs a directive function with the hearer as the beneficiary.

1.4.3 Informative

Language serves an INFORMATIVE function when it is used to tell what the speaker believes, to give information about facts, or to reason things out. This function is characterized by the use of declarative sentences and is most often used in all branches of learning. One important feature of this function is that the speaker commits himself to the truth that something is or is not the case. Consequently, informative statements are often judged as either true or false. For example, "*Water boils at 212 degree Fahrenheit*" is a true statement while "*Gold melts at 300 degrees Fahrenheit*" is false.

1.4.4 Interrogative

When language is used to get information from others, it serves an INTERROGATIVE function.

This includes all questions that expect answers, such as "*When*

did he arrive?", *"What is it like?"*. These questions typically focus on the hearer's beliefs, opinion, knowledge, judgement, and sometimes feelings and attitudes. *"What do you think of it?"*, *"How do you feel now?"* and other forms are quite commonly used. Rhetorical questions, however, do not have interrogative function, as they do not expect answers. They are often statements in question forms with a stronger force than statements. So in terms of function, they belong to informative statements or expressive ones, often.

1.4.5 Expressive

The EXPRESSIVE function is the use of language to reveal something about the feelings and attitudes of the speaker. The simplest examples are ejaculations like *"Good heavens!"*, *"My God!"*; more complex ones are sentences like *"I'm extremely sorry about..."* *"We're most grateful for this"*. While in the informative function language is used to pass judgement on the truth or falsehood of statements, in expressive function, language is used to evaluate, appraise and assert the speaker's attitudes.

1.4.6 Evocative

The EVOCATIVE function is the use of language to create certain feelings in the hearer. Its aim is to amuse, startle, anger, soothe, worry or please. For instance, jokes are designed to amuse

the same feeling in your hearer; conversely in order to evoke a certain sentiment in someone you probably have to show your own feeling first.

1.4.7 Performative

Apart from the six functions already discussed, language is also used to "do things", to perform actions. This is called the PERFORMATIVE function. On certain occasions, the uttering of the appropriate words is the central component in the performance of the act. At a meeting, for example, as soon as the chairman says "*I declare the meeting open*", the meeting has started. If the president says "*I declare war ...*", war exists between the two countries. When the judge says in the court "*I sentence you to ten years of hard labour*", the criminal is sentenced. In all these cases, the act cannot be performed without the sentences being uttered. It should be pointed out, however, that it is always necessary that the circumstances in which the words are uttered should be in some way appropriate. Thus, for naming a ship or street, it is essential that the speaker should be the person appointed to name it; otherwise the act is not successfully performed even though the sentence has been uttered.

1.5 The origin of language

The origin of language is still a mystery. Scholars over the centuries have been interested in it because man and language are so closely related that they believed that if we knew how and when language originated we would probably know how and when man arose as well. However, it is extremely difficult to know how language came into being. For one thing, man has existed at least one

million years and the earliest deciphered written records are only six thousand years old. These records provide no clue at all to the beginning of language. Moreover, the only hard evidence we have about ancient languages is writing, but we know that speech must have preceded writing by a long period of time. So the earliest spoken form of language is irretrievably lost. Consequently, all the theories about the origin of language are hypothetical in nature, but a brief discussion of them may shed some light on the nature of language.

1.5.1 The divine-origin theory

According to Christian belief, God gave Adam the power to name all things. *"So he (God) took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds. Then he brought them to the man to see what he would name them, and that is how they got their names. So the man named all the birds and the animals; ..."* (Genesis, 2:19). This amounts to saying that language is a gift from God to mankind. Similar beliefs are found throughout the world. For instance, Egyptians would believe that the creator of speech was the god Nabu. The Hindus would say we owe our speech to the goddess Sarasvati. People attributed the creation of language to various gods because of the magical properties they believed language had. Basically people used to think that language had the power to make things happen. If one uttered a curse that a person would be struck by lightning, the person would surely die a violent death. In many cultures words were used to control events and became sources of power if chanted again and again. Similar stories were around in China. For example, it was taboo to speak of *"sinking"* and *"overturn"* on a ship, because these

words were believed to have the magic to turn the ship over. These myths and superstitions can never become scientific claims. But they do show how important language has been to man and the miraculous properties he has attached to it.

1.5.2 The invention theory

Many people think that man invented language. But their explanations take different forms. Some would say that the earliest form of language was imitative, or "echoic". Thus, a dog which makes sounds like "*bow-wow*" would be referred to by the word "*Bow-wow*". This explanation would not go very far because such words in any language constitute only a very small minority. Some other people believe that language at its earliest stage consisted of "cries of nature" -- ejaculations of pain, fear, surprise, pleasure, anger, and so on. At that time, language was very much like animal cries. Gestures were also used, but they proved to be too inefficient for communication, and so man invented language based on his "cries of nature". Still others suggested that language arose out of the grunts of men working together. "There is every reason to believe that speech originated in productive activity and arose first in the form of abbreviated motions which represented certain work activities and pointing gestures by which men communicated with one another..." (A.R.Luria, 1970). Many of these theories are inconclusive. The debate is still going on.

1.5.3 The evolutionary theory

More recently, scholars are concerned with the relationship between the development of language and the evolutionary development of the human species. In the long process of evolution,

man gradually stood up, finding a freer use of the lungs and the vocal cords, and more room for the movement of the vocal organs. This, of course, occurred alongside changes in the brain and the nervous system towards greater complexity. Among these scholars some stress the highly developed cognitive abilities, saying that children are born with both thought and language. Others emphasize the development of the physical apparatus for speech, notably the vocal tract and the flexibility of the tongue. Still others believe that in the final analysis it is labour that created the necessity for language. In getting fellow members closer and closer to organize the most primitive society, men-in-the-making found themselves engaged in more joint activities, which demanded cooperation and communication among the members. It was under this strong urge that men began to communicate. In whatever version, the evolutionary theory is only a hypothesis in an outline form; the specific processes are still to be explained.

1.5.4 The first language

In investigating the origin of language, some people have tried to determine the form of the most primitive language. In the fifth century, for instance, a Greek historian reported that an Egyptian king conducted an experiment to this end. He had two infants put in isolation, to be cared for by a servant who was told never to utter a single word in their presence. The idea was that without being exposed to any language, the children would develop their own speech and the first thing they uttered would reveal the original tongue of man. According to the story, the first word uttered was *bekos*, the word for "bread" in Phrygian. This ancient language, then, was believed to be the first language man had ever used.

James IV of Scotland did a similar experiment. The result was different: the children were reported to speak Hebrew, providing “evidence” that Hebrew was the first language. There have been other attempts for this purpose. In 1887, Joseph Elkins held that “there is no other language which can be more reasonably assumed to be the speech first used in the world’s gray morning than can Chinese. ...Hence, Chinese is regarded ... as the ... primeval language.” There is nothing conclusive about these claims, but they do show the belief that many languages developed from a single one, as will be discussed in Chapter 12.

Topics for Discussion

1. What does “language” mean? Is it used in any other senses apart from the ones discussed in this chapter?
2. “Language is human-specific”. How would you interpret this statement? How would you argue for or against it?
3. Would you say that language is arbitrary? What would language be like if it was not arbitrary?
4. Discuss the significance of the property of duality. What would happen if language had only one system of structure?
5. Illustrate the differences between human language and animal communication systems in terms of displacement and cultural transmission.
6. List the basic functions you know of language and define each of them by their aims.

Exercises

1. Rewrite each of the following lists of words into natural English order.
 - (a) Chinese/new/ocean-liners/the
 - (b) latest/the/fashions/Italian
 - (c) girls/Australian/the/pretty
 - (d) What is the rule or pattern that you followed to change the order?

2. Rewrite each list of words into natural English order.
 - (a) four/the/learners/beginning
 - (b) recent/the/event/second
 - (c) apples/fresh/the/five
 - (d) What is the rule or pattern that you followed to change the order?

3. Speakers of Urdu, a language of Pakistan and India think the words in the first column imitate various natural sounds. Match each imitative word in the first column with the words in the second column.

_____	vow vow	1. a cat
_____	myoww	2. a horse
_____	ba	3. a slamming door
_____	sahee	4. a bell
_____	cuck-roo-coo	5. a cock
_____	bwack	6. a dog
_____	guwru guwrun	7. a sheep
_____	dhun	8. a clock
_____	tik	9. a pig
_____	ting-ting	10. a duck

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(Note: Those with asterisks are recommended for further reading.)

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2. WHAT IS LINGUISTICS

2.1 What is linguistics?

Linguistics can be defined as the scientific study of language. This definition implies that linguistics studies not just one language of any society, but the languages of all human societies. The word "study" here does not mean "learning", but "investigation" or "examination". A linguist, a person who studies linguistics, does not need to be able to use a large number of languages for communication purposes, but he should have a wide experience of different types of languages. His task is not to learn to use any particular language, but to study how each language is constructed, how it is used by its speakers, and how it is related to other languages. He is also concerned with how a language varies from dialect to dialect, from one social class to another, how it changes from one historical period to the next, and how children acquire their mother tongue. In a word, linguistics studies the general principles upon which all languages are constructed and operate as systems of communication in the societies in which they are used.

But what does "scientific" mean in the definition? For our present discussion, we can simply say that a scientific study is one which is based on the systematic investigation of data, conducted with reference to some general theory of language structure. The linguist studies linguistic facts in order to discover the nature of the underlying language system; but to make sense of his data he has some hypotheses about the language structure. Any theory formu-

lated must be checked repeatedly against the observed facts. In linguistics, as in any other discipline, data and theory stand in a dialectical complementation; that is, a theory without the support of data is hardly valid; data without being explained by some theory remain a muddled mass of things. The process of study may be stated as follows. First certain linguistic facts are observed; they are found to display some similarities, so generalizations are made about them. Then, on the basis of these generalizations hypotheses are formulated to account for the facts. These hypotheses are tested by further observations and finally a theory is constructed about how language works.

To make his analysis as scientific as possible, the linguist is usually guided by four principles:

(1) EXHAUSTIVENESS: the linguist should gather all the materials relevant to his investigation and give them an adequate explanation. Language is extremely complex; he cannot attempt to describe all aspects of language at once; he is allowed to examine one aspect at a time. If he has chosen phonetics, for instance, he is expected to possess all facts relevant to phonetics and account for them adequately. If he leaves many facts undiscussed, his study will not be regarded as exhaustive and his conclusions will not be accepted as scientific.

(2) CONSISTENCY: there should be no contradiction between different parts of the total statement. For example, if the noun is defined as the "name of person, place, or thing", it should be used in that sense throughout. It would not be consistent to use the term in another sense. It is generally not allowed to say "*X is Y*" in one place and "*X is Z*" in another place.

(3) ECONOMY: Other things being equal, a shorter statement

or analysis is preferred to a longer or more involved one. Two points here deserve our attention. On the one hand, a theory, say about sentence structures in a language, is no good if it just lists all the possible sentences, for it will be long, tedious and useless. On the other hand, a neat and concise statement which leaves many facts unexplained is of no scientific value either, for too many exceptions will invalidate it altogether. Therefore the best statements are the shortest possible which can account most fully for all facts.

(4) OBJECTIVITY: a linguist should be as objective as possible in his description and analysis of data, allowing no prejudice to influence his generalizations. He should not omit any linguistic facts because he himself considers them to be "inelegant" or "sub-standard". Nor should he conceal facts that do not conform to his generalizations. His aim should be to present his analysis in such a way that every part of it can be tested and verified, not only by himself, but by anyone else who makes a description of different data based on the same set of principles. Indeed, it is the insistence on these principles, particularly objectivity, that gives linguistics the status of a science.

2.2 Some basic distinctions in linguistics

We introduce some distinctions in linguistics here for three reasons. One is that they are so essential and popular that they are frequently used in the literature. Secondly, a brief discussion of them throws some light on the objectives and approaches in linguistics. Thirdly, early knowledge of these terms should help to make things easier since references to them are found throughout this book.

2.2.1 Speech and writing

One general principle of linguistic analysis is the primacy of speech over writing. Speech is considered as the primary medium of language for several reasons. Speech is prior to writing historically: speech existed long, long before writing systems came into being. Even today many well-developed languages do not have a writing system yet. Genetically, children always learn to speak before they learn to write. Blind children have no difficulty in learning to speak but deaf children have great difficulty in learning to read. This shows that the channel of sight is not as important as the channel of sound in learning a language. The primacy of speech can also be seen in the forms that writing systems use. Without exception, all written forms “cut in” at some point on the stream of spoken language. That is, the written forms represent the individual sounds, such as English and French. They are called alphabetic writing. Some written forms represent syllables, such as Japanese. They are called syllabic writing. Others represent individual words like the Chinese writing system. They are called logographic writing. (For more detailed discussion, see Chapter 9)

This is not to deny the importance of writing. Writing gives language new scope and uses that speech does not have. First, with writing, messages can be carried through space. Human voice is effective only within earshots. With the help of writing, we can send and receive messages across vast spaces. Secondly, with writing, messages can be carried through time. The spoken word “dies” immediately, but a written message can be transmitted far beyond the moment of production — often from generation to generation and from one culture to another. Thirdly, oral messages are sub-

ject to distortion, either unintentional (when due to misunderstanding for example) or otherwise. Written messages, on the other hand, remain exactly the same whether read a thousand years later or ten thousand miles away.

Everything considered, speech is believed to be more representative of human language than writing. In spite of the common features they share, they differ because they are transmitted in different channels. Most linguistic analysis is focused on speech. This is one major difference between linguists today and the grammarians of the last century.

2.2.2 Descriptive or prescriptive?

A linguistic study is **DESCRIPTIVE** if it describes and analyses facts observed; it is **PRESCRIPTIVE** if it tries to lay down rules for "correct" behaviour. Put it differently, if a linguist talks about "*what is in language*" or "*what people actually say*", he is descriptive. If he tells people "*what should be in language*" or "*what people should say*", he is prescriptive. Linguistic studies before this century are largely prescriptive in the sense that many early grammars were based on "high" (literary, religious) written language. Modern linguistics is mostly descriptive. In their efforts to be scientific and objective, linguists today have made a special point of guarding against prescriptivism, because partial observation and subjective judgement often prevent them from seeing the real nature of language. For instance, traditional grammar often uses logical and aesthetic criteria to judge the correctness of sentences. They tell school children not to say "*It's me*", but say "*It's I*" in answer to the question "*Who is it?*", because "*It's me*" is not logical. They also tell people to avoid "split infinitives", "never end a sentence with a

preposition” and so on, because sentences like that do not sound pleasant to the ear. But since people do use them, they are part of the language. Modern linguists believe that whatever occurs in natural speech (hesitation, incomplete utterance, misunderstanding,.....) should be described in their analysis. They may recognize that one form of speech is more often used by one community or in one particular place than in others; one variety is more appropriate on certain occasions than on others. These are social facts; they should be described and accounted for, but not be ignored. Moreover, language changes through time: new vocabulary and structures arise to meet the needs of communication. These changes should not and cannot be stopped: they must be explained.

2.2.3 Synchronic and Diachronic studies

Language exists in time and changes through time. So we speak of “*middle English*”, “*modern English*”, “*classical Chinese*” and so on. We can study a language as it exists at any one time or over a period of time. We can study Chinese, for instance, as it is today in the 1980s, or as it existed from the Tang Dynasty through to the Qing Dynasty. The description of a language at some point in time is a **SYNCHRONIC** study. The description of a language as it changes through time is a **DIACHRONIC** study. One principle in linguistics is the priority of synchronic descriptions. This implies that unless the various states of a language are successfully studied it would be difficult to describe the changes that have taken place in its historical development. Synchronic descriptions are often thought of as being descriptions of the language as it exists at the present day and most linguistic studies are of this type. However, it is possible to make a synchronic descrip-

tion of a language as it existed at any point in the past provided there are sufficient written records from that period.

The distinction between synchronic and diachronic studies is clear enough, at least in theory. If we look at language closely, however, it is not easy to draw a sharp line between these two aspects of language studies. There are several reasons for this. First, languages are in a constant state of changing. There is never a moment when a language remains static for our description. We can never be too certain whether a new word or phrase was introduced and accepted today or yesterday, this year or last year. The process of change is usually long and gradual. Secondly, the language of any speech community is never uniform. Different groups of people (say, because of age, place of origin, profession or education) speak a somewhat different variety of the language. Which variety is to be described is quite a matter for decision, for there is always the possibility for someone to challenge the description saying "*No, we don't talk like that. We would say ...*". Thirdly, when a language changes, it is not the case that one set of features are suddenly replaced by another set of features.

Two important points emerge from our discussion. First, the notion of language change should be carefully applied. In a diachronic study, the different states of a language compared should be relatively far removed from one another in time, otherwise the changes will not be obvious or typical. Secondly, when we say synchronic descriptions are prior to diachronic descriptions, we do not mean that in describing one state of the language, some knowledge of its previous state is unnecessary. In fact, we often need to know what the language was like previously in order to describe with insight what it is like today. In short, there is a close connec-

tion between the study of diachronic change on the one hand and synchronic variation on the other.

2.2.4 *Langue* and *parole*

This is a distinction made by the Swiss linguist F. de Saussure early this century. *LANGUE* refers to the abstract linguistic system shared by all the members of a speech community and *PAROLE* refers to the actualized language, or realization of *langue*. As a social product, *langue* is a set of conventions that members of a speech community seem to abide by. It can be thought of as the generalized rules of the language. *Parole*, on the other hand, is the concrete use of the conventions or application of the rules. We can compare them along the following dimensions. *Langue* is abstract; *parole* is specific to the situation in which it occurs. *Langue* is not actually spoken by anyone; *parole* is always a naturally occurring event. *Langue* is relatively stable and systematic; *parole* is subject to personal and situational constraints. Take our Chinese language for example. It is like a convention over and above all of us; no one can go against it. It is like an agreement we have all signed; we all agree, for instance, to call the thing we write with “*bi*”. Our language is stable; at least it does not change so fast as to make communication impossible overnight. But when we use it, we all behave so differently. We are using the same system, but the applications are so varied. Each act of speaking is a unique event, different from any other acts. Even the same person uses the system differently on different occasions for different purposes.

Which should be studied in linguistics, *langue* or *parole*? For de Saussure, *parole* is a mass of confused facts and not suitable for

systematic investigation. What the linguist has to do is to abstract *langue* from instances of *parole* — that is, to discover the regularities governing all instances of *parole* and make them the subject of linguistics. The distinction between *langue* and *parole* is very important, and it influenced many linguists in later generations (cf. 2.2.5 and 2.2.6).

2.2.5 Competence and performance

Similar to the distinction between *langue* and *parole* is the distinction between competence and performance made by an American linguist, Noam Chomsky in the 1950s. COMPETENCE is the ideal language user's knowledge of the rules of his language. PERFORMANCE is the actual realization of this knowledge in utterances. Competence enables a speaker to produce and understand an indefinite number of sentences and to recognize grammatical mistakes and ambiguities. A speaker's competence is stable but his performance is often influenced by psychological and social factors. For example, a person's knowledge of the language may be perfect, but on certain occasions he may not perform very well due to various factors such as pressure, distress, anxiety, or embarrassment. Slips of the tongue, false starts, unnecessary pauses, among other things, all belong to the imperfection of performance. A person may make grammatical mistakes in speech, but that does not mean that he does not know the rule. If he is given an ungrammatical sentence, he can recognize it as ungrammatical. The point is that a speaker's performance does not always match his competence. Chomsky thinks that the object of investigation in linguistics is the ideal speaker's competence, not his performance; that is, we must discover what an ideal speaker knows of his native

language. Chomsky also believes that one's linguistic competence must be a set of rules which can be applied over and over again to generate large number of sentences, including sentences he has never heard before. These rules underlie his performance, but he cannot tell explicitly what these rules are. The task of the linguist is to discover the rules from the speaker's performance.

Chomsky's distinction and Saussure's distinction are not exactly the same. Saussure's *langue* is a social product, a set of conventions for a speech community. Chomsky regards competence as a property of the mind of each individual. Saussure looks at language more from a sociological point of view while Chomsky looks at it more from a psychological point of view.

2.2.6 Linguistic potential and actual linguistic behaviour

Another similar distinction is made by an English linguist M. A.K. Halliday in the 1960s, the distinction between linguistic potential and actual linguistic behaviour. Halliday looks at language from a functional point of view; he is more concerned with what speakers do with language. With language, there is a wide range of things a speaker can do in the culture he is in. There are many things he can say, for example, to many people, on many topics. What he actually says on a particular occasion to a particular individual is what he has selected from among the many possible things he could have said. This leads to Halliday's distinction between linguistic potential and actual linguistic behaviour. His linguistic potential is similar to Saussure's *langue* and Chomsky's competence, and his actual linguistic behaviour is similar to the notions of *parole* and performance. Among the distinctions, *parole*, performance and actual linguistic behaviour have a lot in common; but *langue*,

competence and linguistic potential differ considerably. They are similar only in one aspect, that is, they all refer to the constant which underlies the utterances that constitute *parole*/ performance/ actual behaviour. Their difference is fairly obvious. *Langue* is a social property while linguistic potential is something available for the speaker to select from. Competence is a form of “knowing” while linguistic potential is a set of possibilities for “doing”. The competence versus performance distinction is one between what a person “knows” and what he “does”, while the linguistic potential versus actual linguistic behaviour distinction is one between what a person “can do” and what a person “does”.

2.3 Major branches of general linguistics

The study of language as a whole is often called **GENERAL LINGUISTICS**. This includes the basic concepts, theories, descriptions, models and methods in the analysis of language. It is used in contrast with branches of study which apply linguistics to the research of other areas. Language is immensely complicated. The complexity makes it impossible for the linguist to describe it all at once. To make his statements scientific, he often concentrates on one aspect of language at a time. This gives rise to different branches of general linguistics.

2.3.1 Phonetics

PHONETICS is the branch of linguistics which studies the characteristics of speech sounds and provides methods for their description, classification and transcription. The subject can be approached from three different angles. The study of the speech organs and how they move to produce speech sound is called **ARTICU-**

LATORY PHONETICS. The study of the physical properties of speech sound is called **ACOUSTIC PHONETICS**. The study of the perception of sounds by the human ear is called **AUDITORY PHONETICS**. We shall be mostly concerned with articulatory phonetics in the book.

2.3.2 Phonology

PHONOLOGY is the branch of linguistics which studies the sound patterns of languages. Human beings can make a wide range of sounds but only a small set of sounds are used in speech. Phonology identifies the set of speech sounds for each language, how they are arranged to form meaningful units, and the function of each sound. Phonology reveals what the possible combinations of sounds in a language are and explains why certain words take the form they do.

2.3.3 Morphology

MORPHOLOGY is the branch of linguistics which studies the form of words. It identifies the smallest meaningful units in a language which are called morphemes and looks into the ways the morphemes are arranged to form words.

2.3.4 Syntax

SYNTAX is the branch of linguistics which studies the rules governing the combination of words into sentences. Sentences are not strings of words put together in a random order. They permit certain sequences of words but not others. Change in the sequence affects the meaning of the sentence. Syntax identifies the permissible sequences in a language and the relationships between elements

in sentence structure.

2.3.5 Semantics

SEMANTICS is the branch of linguistics which studies the meaning of language. There are many different approaches to semantics. One can look into the relation between linguistic expressions on the one hand and objects, persons and events to which the words refer on the other. One can also study the ways in which the meaning in a language is structured and distinguish different types of meaning.

2.4 Use of linguistics

Young as linguistics is as a science, it has rapidly penetrated into many other areas. This is hardly surprising. For language is closely related with so many things. For instance, as a tool for communication, language is intimately related with society. As a human capacity, language is related with psychology. As a basic element in expression, language is certainly inseparable from literature. This is, of course, not the end of the list, the discussion that follows is to show in a broad outline the kinds of use that linguistics has been put to so far.

2.4.1 Linguistics and language teaching

Linguistics has been extensively used in language teaching, especially in the teaching of foreign and second languages. Most people have to learn a foreign language by learning its grammatical rules. Naturally, the teacher has to know these rules first. The teacher has to decide which words and which sentence structures should be introduced first and which later. This involves then writ-

ing the right kind of material and designing an appropriate syllabus. To evaluate the teaching and learning, the teacher should also know how to set language tests and how to interpret the results obtained from them. On top of all this, the teacher also has the task of classifying the student's errors (slips of the tongue, interference of the first language, over-generalization of a rule, for example) and suggests ~~necessary~~-remedies. This has not yet included the teaching of appropriate use of the language in particular contexts. To achieve all this, some linguistic knowledge is absolutely necessary. Now the special term APPLIED LINGUISTICS is used to refer to this branch of linguistics (see Appendix D).

2.4.2 Linguistics and society

Language and society are closely connected. For one thing, the language a person uses often reveals his social, educational and regional background. People from different social classes often speak differently. Educated people do not talk exactly the same as uneducated people. Many speak with an accent peculiar to their place of origin. For another, there seem to be certain social norms as to which variety of language is to be used on what occasions. Generally, a formal variety is used on formal occasions. A more colloquial variety is preferred among family members and close friends in informal settings. A person who does not go by these norms may be criticised for his "inappropriate linguistic behaviour". Moreover, there is the problem of attitude towards different dialects or unofficial languages in a community. Some dialects or languages are more prestigious than others. Often one dialect is regarded as the "standard speech" or one language is said to be the official language in multilingual situations. All these problems are inves-

tigated by a special branch of linguistics called **SOCIOLINGUISTICS**.

2.4.3 Linguistics and literature

There would be no literature without language. Novelists, poets and playwrights make skillful use of language and exploit every possibility of language to achieve both expected and unexpected effects. For example, a character is successfully portrayed largely by the kind of language he or she uses in various situations. To fully appreciate a literary text mere linguistic intuition is not enough. An analytical knowledge of the rules and conventions of normal linguistic communication is necessary. Now it is generally believed that the greater our detailed knowledge of the workings of the language system, the greater our capacity for awareness of the effects produced by literary texts and that a principled analysis of language can be used to make our commentary on these effects less impressionistic and subjective. In fact, many critics and stylisticians are now using the findings and methodology of linguistics to analyse literature and have shown satisfactory results. These endeavours are now covered under the term **LINGUISTIC STYLISTICS** or **STYLISTIC LINGUISTICS**.

2.4.4 Linguistics and psychology

Language is a product and capacity of the human brain. Production or comprehension of speech would be impossible without the workings of the brain. The operation of the human brain is still a mystery; there is little access to it for reasonable research. It is thought possible then to get some insight into it by studying language, one of its most important products. Consequently,

many psychologists and linguists have tried to examine the relation between language and the brain, developing a new branch of science called **PSYCHOLINGUISTICS**. This is a use of linguistics in which one studies the correlation between linguistic behaviour and the psychological processes that are believed to underlie that behaviour. Within this area of research, some people have been investigating the effects of psychological constraints on the use of language. Others have been concerned with the mental processes in speech planning, production, perception and comprehension. The most well-developed subject is the study of language acquisition in children.

2.4.5 Some other applications

ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS: it uses the theories and methods of anthropology to study language variation and language use in relation to the cultural patterns and beliefs of man. For example, it studies how to identify, relying on linguistic features, a member of a primitive community with a social, religious or kinship group.

NEUROLINGUISTICS: it studies the neurological basis of language development and use in human beings. On the basis of this, it also tries to construct a model of the brain's control over the process of speech and hearing. There have been a number of studies on how many messages the nervous system has to send out to various speech organs in order to produce one individual sound and in what order they are sent. There has also been a lot of work done on the treatment of language disorder.

MATHEMATICAL LINGUISTICS: it studies the mathematical features of language, often employing models and concepts of

mathematics. It has several approaches. One approach is to study the application of statistical techniques in linguistic theory and description. This includes the analysis of frequency of distribution of linguistic units in texts, with the aim of identifying the distinctive characteristics of the speaker or writer. Attempts have also been made to establish general laws concerning the statistical characteristics of languages, such as the relative frequency of items in different samples.

COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS: it is an approach to linguistics in which mathematical techniques and concepts are applied, often with the aid of a computer. Partially successful attempts have been made to make machines translate one language into another (it is called machine translation or automatic translation). Now there are many projects which “teach” machines to recognize speech sounds and therefore words (it is called speech synthesis). Today it is possible for man and machine to have simple conversations.

Topics for discussion

1. What is linguistics? What does a linguist do?
2. How can a linguist make his analysis scientific?
3. The Chinese writing system started with little pictures such as ☉ for “the sun”, △△△ for “mountain”. Isn’t it possible that our ancestors communicated through pictures first and the spoken word arose later?
4. Do you prefer descriptive linguistics to prescriptive linguistics? Give your reasons.
5. What is the difference between diachronic linguistics and syn-

chronic linguistics?

6. Do you agree with the distinction between *langue* and *parole*? What would you say is the object of study in linguistics?
7. What is the major difference between Saussure's distinction of *langue* and *parole* and Chomsky's distinction of competence and performance?
8. Which distinction do you think is the most reasonable or useful, *langue* and *parole*, competence and performance, linguistic potential and actual linguistic behaviour?
9. Have you ever noticed something which shows the close relationship between language and society?
10. Name some groups of people who need linguistic knowledge in their work.

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3. PHONETICS

3.1 Scope of phonetics

PHONETICS is the science which studies the characteristics of human sound-making, especially those sounds used in speech, and provides methods for their description, classification and transcription. Human beings are capable of numerous sounds, but not all of them are used systematically in speech. One's coughs or snores, for instance, are not speech sounds, because they are not units in the language system. They do not express one's thoughts or feelings in a systematic way.

SPEECH SOUNDS may be studied from different angles, thus we have at least three branches of phonetics, articulatory phonetics, auditory phonetics and acoustic phonetics.

3.1.1 Articulatory phonetics

Speech sounds may be studied from the point of view of the speaker, that is, we may examine the way in which a speech sound is produced to discover which vocal organs are involved and how they coordinate in the process. This aspect of phonetics is called **ARTICULATORY PHONETICS**.

3.1.2 Auditory phonetics

A meaningful act of speech has another end — the reception end. The sounds produced by the speaker will be received by the hearer. Speech sounds therefore may also be studied from the

hearer's point of view. We may look into the impression a speech sound makes on the hearer as mediated by the ear, the auditory nerve and the brain. This area of research is known as **AUDITORY PHONETICS**. It is a less well-studied branch of phonetics, because we still have difficulties in identifying and measuring psychological and neurological responses to speech sounds, although anatomical and physiological studies of the ear are quite advanced.

3.1.3 Acoustic phonetics

To make a speech sound visible so that we can measure its components objectively we must then go into the domain of **ACOUSTIC PHONETICS**, which studies the physical properties of speech sounds, as transmitted between mouth and ear. Instruments, such as the oscillograph and the sound spectrograph, have been used to translate a sound into a visual representation of its components in terms of frequency and intensity. The sound spectrograph will, in addition, show the formants of vowels.

However, what we are concerned with here is mainly articulatory phonetics.

3.2 The Vocal Organs

The vocal organs (see Fig. 1), or the speech organs, are organs of the human body whose secondary use is in the production of speech sounds. The vocal organs may be viewed as consisting of three parts, the initiator of the air-stream, the producer of voice and the resonating cavities.

3.2.1 The initiator of the air-stream

The first requisite for the production of a speech sound is that

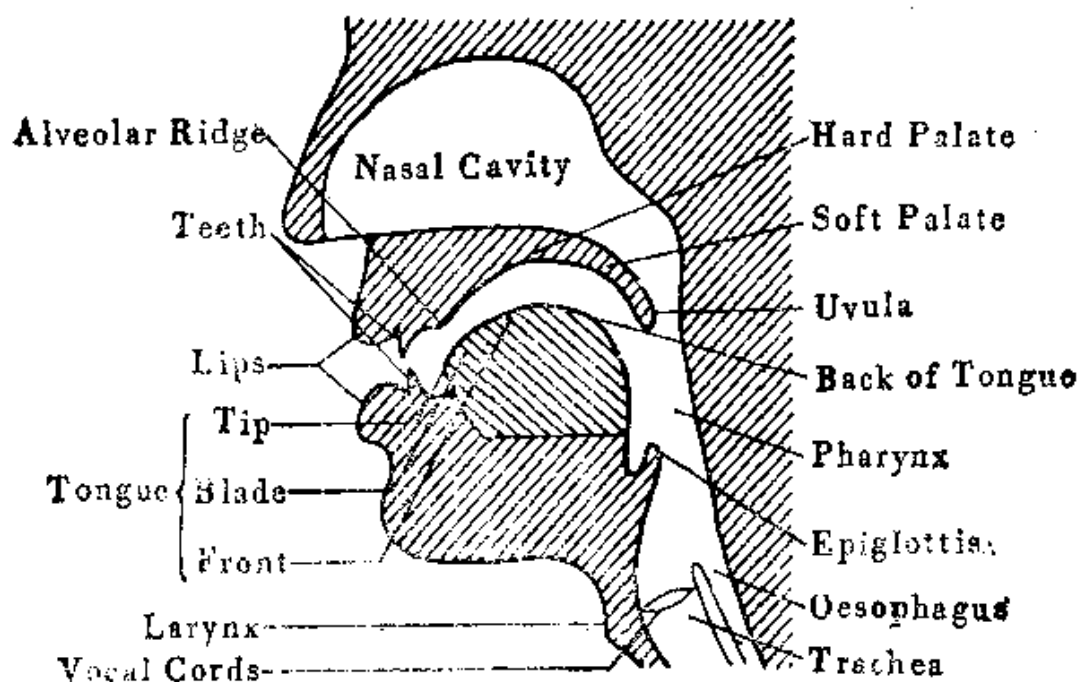


Fig. 1 The Vocal Organs

there is an air-stream. In most languages, the air-stream usually comes from the lungs, and the sound is superimposed on the outgoing breath. Consequently we have at times to stop and catch some breath in the middle of speech. Air-streams of other sources and directions are also used in some languages. Sindhi, a language spoken in India and Pakistan, for example, uses the pharynx air to push down the larynx so that air is sucked into the mouth, and in this way, **IMPLOSIVES**, in contrast with **PLOSIVES**, are produced.

3.2.2 The vocal cords

The air-stream provided by the lungs has to undergo a number of modifications to acquire the quality of a speech sound. The first point where it is possible to modify the air-stream is at the top of the windpipe, which ends in a bony structure called the **LARYNX**.

The front part of the larynx, especially in men, protrudes and is popularly known as the 'Adam's apple'. Inside the larynx are the **VOCAL CORDS**, which, in spite of their name, are not cords or strings such as one sees on a violin or a piano. They are in fact two folds of membrane (hence also the name vocal folds), which are fixed together at the front but horizontally moveable at the back. (see Fig. 2) The space between the vocal cords is termed the **GLOTTIS**.



Fig. 2 Diagrams of the vocal folds: (a) tightly closed as for [ʔ]; (b) wide open as for breath; (c) loosely together and vibrating as for voice.

In speech the vocal cords have three main functions.

(1) The vocal cords may be closed tightly so that the airstream from the lungs is blocked and the air pressure behind them builds up. This phenomenon is called the **GLOTTAL STOP** and symbolized as [ʔ]. Thus the sound is inaudible, but it has its effect on surrounding segments. In some languages, for example, Hausa, an African language, the glottal stop forms a regular part of the sound system. In English, it often occurs initially to pronounce a word like 'idiot' which begins with a vowel.

(2) If the vocal cords are brought together to the extent that

there is only a narrow passage between them, the pressure of the airstream will set them in vibration. That is, they will open slightly to let a small amount of air through, then they will close again, then open afresh, then close again, and so on. The result is a sound similar to what we get by striking a key on a piano. In other words, the sound has a regular waveform and the number of vibrations in a second is fixed, so that we can perceive its pitch. In phonetics, this sound is called **VOICE**, and sounds produced while the vocal cords are vibrating are called **VOICED SOUNDS**. Consonants like English [b, m, z] are voiced. Vowels are usually voiced, too.

The **PITCH** of a sound depends on the rate of vibration of the vocal cords, which in turn is determined by the length of the vocal cords. In male adults the vocal cords are typically longer (about 23 mm) than in women (about 18 mm). Therefore the sounds produced by men have a lower pitch range than those by women.

(3) When the vocal cords are drawn wide apart, as in normal breathing without speaking, the air-stream passes through the glottis freely and produces a faint sound. This sound will become audible if we breathe through the mouth with some strength instead of through the nose. In phonetics, this sound is symbolized by [h]. When the vocal cords are not vibrating at the time of its production, the resultant sound is called a **VOICELESS SOUND**. Consonants like [f, s, p] are voiceless sounds.

3.2.3 The resonating cavities

Sounds produced by the movement of the vocal cords need to be amplified and further modified in order to be functional in speech. Without the resonating cavities, the vocal cords, like the strings of

a violin without the body of the instrument, would make very little noise.

In the human speech mechanism, there are three resonating cavities: the PHARYNX, the NASAL CAVITY and the ORAL CAVITY.

3.2.3.1 The pharynx

The PHARYNX stretches from the top of the larynx up to the back of the nasal cavity and serves as the container of a volume of air which can be set into vibration in harmony with vibrations coming from the vocal cords. The pharynx is not of itself very variable in shape, but there are two ways in which its dimensions can be altered. One is by raising the larynx to shorten the length of the tube from below; the other is raising the soft palate (a muscular flap at the back of the mouth roof, also known as the velum) to shorten the tube from the top.

3.2.3.2 The nasal cavity

The NASAL CAVITY is of fixed dimensions and shape, and its contribution to speech is entirely a matter of resonance. The soft palate mentioned above may also be lowered, as in the normal position for breathing, so that the air can go through the nasal cavity. If at the same time, the oral cavity is blocked at some point, say at the lips, then the sound produced will have a nasal resonance only, and is called a NASAL.

3.2.3.3 The oral cavity

The ORAL CAVITY is by far the most important of the three cavities; it is here that most of the distinctions of articulate speech

are fashioned. Due to the mobility of the lower jaw and the lips, but overwhelmingly to the tongue, this cavity is the most variable in dimensions and shape.

The oral cavity is bounded at the top by a dome-shaped structure the **PALATE**. The front part of the palate is bony and fixed, hence the term **HARD PALATE**; its back part, the **SOFT PALATE**, as mentioned, is muscular and moveable. The soft fleshy tip of the soft palate hanging down at the back of the mouth is called the **UVULA**. It can be made to vibrate very rapidly and this gives rise to an *r*-like sound, such as is used in French. On the hard palate just behind the teeth one can feel a prominent ridge. This covers the roots of the teeth and is called the teeth ridge or, more learnedly, the **ALVEOLAR RIDGE**. Moving further outwards, we come to the teeth and the outmost are the lips forming the front exit of the oral cavity.

At the bottom of the oral cavity lies a complex muscular structure the **TONGUE**. The tongue does not show obvious sections. Yet, since its position must often be described in considerable detail, certain arbitrary divisions are made. When the tongue is at rest, with its tip lying behind the lower teeth, the part which lies opposite the hard palate is called the **FRONT** and that which faces the soft palate is called the **BACK**. The tapering section facing the teeth ridge is called the **BLADE** and its extremity the **TIP**.

The system of vocal organs is also termed the **VOCAL TRACT**. The part which is above the larynx is called the supraglottal tract and the part below the larynx the subglottal tract. The supraglottal is further divided into the **ORAL TRACT** and the **NASAL TRACT**, the dividing line being the soft palate in its raised position. The vocal organs in the oral tract are technically known as **ARTICULA-**

TORS, those which are moveable are active articulators and those not moveable are passive articulators.

3.3 Consonants

Speech sounds may be classified into two major types in terms of their articulatory characteristics. The sounds in the production of which there is an obstruction of the airstream at some point of the vocal tract are called CONSONANTS. The sounds in the production of which no articulators come very close together and the air-stream passes through the vocal tract without obstruction are called VOWELS.

The obstruction in the production of consonants is caused by different vocal organs and of various degrees. The different vocal organs, or more exactly the different parts of the vocal organs, which are involved in the production of consonants are known as PLACES OF ARTICULATION; and the degrees of obstructions, complete, partial, or a mere narrowing, are known as MANNERS OF ARTICULATION.

3.3.1 Places of articulation

In a discussion of this scope, we shall not enumerate all the possible places of articulation, but be contented to limit ourselves to the ten most important ones.

(1) BILABIAL—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the two lips, such as in the production of [p, b, m] of the English words “*pie, buy, my*”.

(2) LABIODENTAL—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the lower lip and the upper front teeth, such as in the production of [f, v] of the English words “*fe, vie*”.

(3) **DENTAL**—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the tongue tip or blade and the upper front teeth, such as in the production of [θ, ð] of the English words “*thigh, thy*”.

(4) **ALVEOLAR**—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the tongue tip or blade and the alveolar ridge, such as in the production of [t, d, l, n, s, z] of the English words “*tie, die, lie, nigh, sigh, zyme*”.

(5) **RETROFLEX**—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the underside of the tongue tip and the back of the alveolar ridge. The term “retroflex” is somewhat confusing. It does not directly identify the parts of the vocal organs concerned, but specifies a particular gesture of the tongue—the tip of the tongue curled up and back. In the standard pronunciation of Southern British English, known as **RECEIVED PRONUNCIATION (RP)**, retroflex sounds are not usually used, but speakers of Indian languages often use retroflex sounds for [t, d] in English words, and a retroflex r-sound is typical of many American speakers.

(6) **PALATO-ALVEOLAR**—the obstruction of the air-stream is caused by the tongue blade and the back of the alveolar ridge, such as in the production of [ʃ, ʒ] of the English word “*shy*” and the French word “*genre*”.

(7) **PALATAL**—the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate to obstruct the air-stream, such as in the production of [j] of the English words “*yes, you*”.

(8) **VELAR**—the back of the tongue is raised so that it touches the soft palate to obstruct the air-stream, such as in the production of [k, g, ŋ] of the English words “*sick, zig, sing*”.

(9) **UVULAR**—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the back of the tongue and the uvular, such as in the production

of [ʁ] or [R] of the French words "*rouge, rose*".

(10) **GLOTTAL**—the obstruction of the airstream is caused by the vocal cords, such as in the production of [ʔ], the glottal stop mentioned before. The English [h] in words such as "*her, high*" is also described as a glottal sound, though there is only some tension, not really any obstruction, at the glottis when it is pronounced.

Some sounds involve the simultaneous use of two places of articulation. For example, the English [w] has both an approximation of the two lips and that of the back of the tongue and the soft palate, and may be termed **LABIAL-VELAR**.

3.3.2 Manners of articulation

At a given place of articulation, the airstream may be obstructed in different ways, resulting in different manners of articulation, the major types of which, in decreasing degrees of obstruction, are the following:

(1) **PLOSIVE**—in the production of a plosive, the air-stream is obstructed completely both in the oral and nasal tracts, so that when the closure in the oral tract is suddenly released, the compressed air rushes out and produces an explosive sound. According to the place of the oral closure, plosives may be bilabial [p, b], alveolar [t, d], velar [k, g], glottal [ʔ], etc. A plosive can also be called an **ORAL STOP**.

(2) **NASAL**—in the production of a nasal, the air-stream is completely obstructed in the oral tract but not in the nasal tract (the soft palate is lowered), so that the air passes through the nose freely. Closure at different places of the oral tract brings different resonances to the sounds, so nasals are also classified according to the place of the oral closure, e.g. bilabial [m], alveolar [n],

velar [ŋ], etc. A nasal can also be called a **NASAL STOP**.

(3) **TRILL**—in the production of a trill the obstruction of the air-stream is caused by air pressure when a flexible organ touches and leaves a firmer surface in very quick movements repeatedly. For example, the tongue tip may make very quick taps against the alveolar ridge repeatedly, and produce an alveolar trill [r], such as those found in Russian, Italian, Spanish and typical Scottish English. The trill made by the uvula tapping against the back of the tongue is called a uvular trill [R], which can be heard in Dutch, Portuguese and French. In German, the trill may be alveolar or uvular, they do not contrast.

(4) **TAP** or **FLAP**—in the production of a tap, the obstruction of the air-stream only lasts for a very short period, it is simply a very rapid articulation of a plosive. In English an alveolar tap [ɾ] is often used when “r” occurs in intervocalic positions, such as in “*verry, sorry, carry*”. In many forms of American English, the alveolar tap is also the regular pronunciation of [t, d, n] in words such as “*latter, ledder, tanner*”.

(5) **LATERAL**—in the production of a lateral the air-stream is obstructed along the centre of the oral tract, but one or both sides of the tongue are away from the roof of the mouth, so that the air can go through the mouth laterally. This manner of articulation is peculiar in that there are manners of articulation within it. That is when the air goes through the sides of the mouth, it may or may not produce audible friction depending on the space between the tongue and the side teeth. For instance, [l] of the English words “*lie, low*” is normally produced without audible friction, so it is more precisely called a **LATERAL APPROXIMANT**.

(6) **FRICATIVE**—in the production of a fricative two vocal

organs are brought very close together (but not to the extent of touching each other to form a closure) so that the airstream forcing its way through the resulting narrowing becomes turbulent, and this turbulence is heard as a fricative noise. In English the most frequently used fricatives are labiodental [f, v], dental [θ, ð], alveolar [s, z], and palatal-alveolar [ʃ, ʒ]. Among them, [s, z, ʃ, ʒ] are made with a rather high-pitched, hissy kind of friction and are sometimes referred to as **SIBILANTS**; the others, having a less hissy, more diffuse kind of friction, are referred to as **non-sibilants**.

(7) **APPROXIMANT**—in the production of an approximant the space between two approximating vocal organs is a little wider than that for a fricative, just wide enough to avoid causing friction when the air-stream passes through them. In English, [r] in words like “red, right” is more often pronounced as an approximant instead of as a fricative, and symbolized as [ɹ]. The [j] in “you” and [w] in “we” are also approximants. In the production of these sounds, the air-stream is not in fact obstructed, which is a characteristic of vowels, therefore [j] and [w] were called **SEMI-VOWELS**, and [ɹ] **FRICTIONLESS CONTINUANT** in the past.

(8) **AFFRICATE**—As there are sounds involving two places of articulation, so there are sounds involving two manners of articulation. [tʃ, dʒ] of the English words “church, judge”, for example, are each a combination of a plosive and a fricative. In their production the tongue tip or blade touches the alveolar ridge and forms a closure for [t, d], and at the same time, the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate, then the tongue leaves the alveolar ridge slowly, instead of suddenly, so that a fricative is made immediately after the plosive. Sounds produced in this manner are called **AFFRICATES**.

3.3.3 The classification of consonants

With place of articulation and manner of articulation as the two dimensions of a chart, the English consonants mentioned so far may be classified as follows:

Table 1.

A Chart of the English Consonants

		Place of Articulation							
		bilabial	labio-dental	dental	alveolar	palato-alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
Manner of Articulation	nasal	m			n			ŋ	
	plosive	p b			t d			k ɣ	
	fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
	Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
	approximant (central)	(w)			r		j	w	
	lateral (approximant)				l				

Some sounds share the same place and manner of articulation. Therefore some other dimension is needed to set them further apart. The one that is currently in use is the feature of **VOICING**. It is customary to place the voiceless one on the left, the voiced one on the right, such as [p, b], [t, d], [k, ɣ], etc.

The distinction between central and lateral articulations and that between oral and nasal escaping of the air-stream are, too, considered necessary for the classification of consonants. So a complete description of a consonant includes five factors: 1) the state of the vocal cords (voiced or voiceless); 2) the place of articulation; 3) the course of the escaping of the air-stream (central or lateral); 4) the position of the soft palate (oral or nasal); and 5) the manner of articulation. Thus the three consonants in the word "*final*" may be described in the following way:

1	2	3	4	5
[f]: voiceless	labiodental	(central)	(oral)	fricative
[n]: voiced	alveolar	(central)	nasal	(plosive)
[l]: voiced	alveolar	lateral	(oral)	(approximant)

Since some factors can be inferred from the others, they are often left out as shown by the brackets.

3.4 Vowels

In the production of vowels, the vocal organs do not come very close together to form obstructions to the air-stream, so it is difficult to have a clear sensation of the whereabouts of the vocal organs. Therefore methods for describing vowels on some basis other than articulatory were sought in the last century. Eventually, it occurred to the phoneticians that it would be a way out to establish, on an auditory basis, a set of arbitrary reference points—cardinal vowels, so that a given vowel could be described in terms of its relation to them.

3.4.1 Cardinal vowels

Of the various CARDINAL VOWEL systems, the most satisfactory is the one devised by Daniel Jones. Jones first fixed the qualities of the two vowels which were produced with the tongue in most easily felt positions. When the soft palate is raised and the lips are unrounded, the vowel produced with the tongue raised as high and as forward as possible without causing audible friction is symbolized as [i]; and the vowel produced with the tongue held as low and as far back as possible without causing audible friction is symbolized as [ɑ]. Then between the [i] and [ɑ] positions he selected three points where the vowel qualities seemed to be equidistant and symbolized them as [e, ε, a]. The same procedure was applied when the back of the tongue was raised from the [ɑ] position while the lips changed progressively from a wide open shape to a closely rounded one. Another three auditorily equidistant points were thus established from the lowest to the highest position and they were given the symbols [ɔ, o, u]. These are illustrated in Fig. 3. (Fig. 3)

The first five of these vowels are pronounced with the lips un-

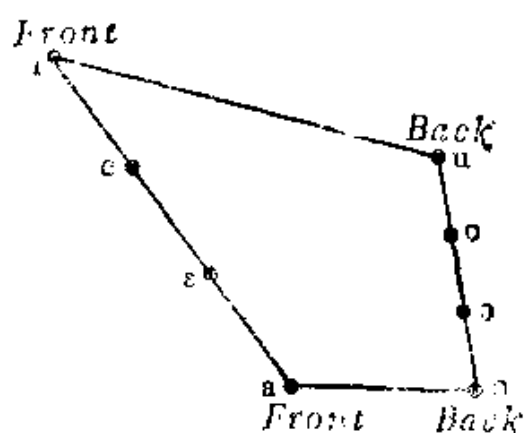


Fig. 3 Diagram illustrating the Tongue positions of the eight primary Cardinal Vowels.

rounded and the remaining three are pronounced with the lips rounded. If we reverse the lip position, i.e., pronounce the first five with the lips rounded and the rest with the lips unrounded, we get another eight cardinal vowels. They are [y, ø, œ, ɤ, ʊ, ʏ, ɪ, u].

The first eight vowels are called primary cardinal vowels and the rest secondary cardinal vowels.

With the cardinal vowels as the standard, the vowels in a particular language can be described with relative accuracy and ease. The English [i:], for example, may be described as pronounced with the front of the tongue in a bit lower and more centralized position than the cardinal [i]. The English [e] is pronounced with the front of the tongue in a position between the cardinal [e] and [ɛ].

3.4.2 The classification of vowels

In the previous discussion three factors were employed to distinguish between vowels. They are: (1) the height of tongue raising (high, mid, low)^①, (2) the position of the highest part of the tongue (front, central, back); and (3) the degree of lip rounding (rounded, unrounded). In terms of these three dimensions, the English vowel [i] may be described as an unrounded high front vowel and [ɔ] a rounded low back vowel.

For a more precise classification of vowels in the languages, there are three additional factors worth mentioning. They are: (1) whether a vowel is oral or nasal; (2) whether a vowel is long or short; and (3) whether a vowel is pure or gliding.

In the last section we noted that cardinal vowels are produced

^① A four-term division of close, half-close, half-open, open is preferred by some phoneticians.

with the soft palate raised. That is to say, there is a closure caused by the velum—a velic closure, the air-stream cannot go through the nasal cavity, so cardinal vowels are all oral vowels. In some languages, however, there are vowels produced with the soft palate lowered, and the air-stream goes through both the oral and nasal cavities, so there is a nasal resonance in the vowel, and these nasalized vowels contrast with the oral ones. For instance, the word for “hand” in French is *main* [mɛ̃] and the word for “dish” is *met* [mɛ], the only difference being that the former has a nasalized vowel and the latter an oral vowel.

In English there are also contrasts between long and short vowels. But here the difference is not entirely a matter of length, it is a combination of both quality and length. The so-called short vowel [ɪ] is not only shorter but also pronounced with the front of the tongue in a little opener and more central position than [i:]. The same is true of the relation between [ʊ] and [u:] except that in this case it is the back of the tongue that is concerned. In view of this situation, some phoneticians prefer to specify the pairs of traditional long and short vowels in terms of tension, the former being tense, the latter lax. Some even go to the extent of choosing two distinctive symbols for the members of the pairs and leave vowel length unmarked, e.g. [i] for the traditional [i:], [ɪ] or [ɪ̞] for the traditional [ɪ]; and [ʊ] for [ʊ:], [ʊ̞] or [ʊ̞̞] for [ʊ]. Table 2 illustrates the symbols used by various phoneticians.

The distinction between pure and gliding vowels is known more familiarly as one between MONOPHTHONGS and DIPHTHONGS. A gliding (or diphthongal) vowel involves a change in quality within the one vowel. It glides from one element to a second element, and usually the first part is more prominent than

Table 2.

A comparison of some systems for transcribing vowel sounds.

	Kenyon & Knott	Trager & Smith	Prator & Robinette	Jones
beat	i	iy	iy	i:
bit	ɪ	i	ɪ	ɪ
bait	e	ey	ey	eɪ
bet	ɛ	e	ɛ	e
bat	æ	æ	æ	æ
father	ɑ	ɑ	ɑ	ɑ
bother	ɑ	ɑ	ɑ	ɔ
bought	ɔ	ɔh	ɔ	ɔ:
boat	o	ow	ow	ou
put	ʊ	u	ʊ	u
boot	u	uw	uw	u:
butt	ʌ	ə	ɔ	ə
bite	aɪ	ay	ay	aɪ
bout	au	aw	aw	au
boy	ɔɪ	ɔy	ɔy	ɔɪ

	Webster's	Ladeforged	ALD	Longman
beat	ē	i	i	i:
bit	ɪ	ɪ	ɪ	ɪ
bait	ā	eɪ	eɪ	eɪ
bet	e	ɛ	e	e
bat	ɑ	æ	æ	æ
father	ā	ɑ	ɑ	ɑ:
bother	ó	ɒ	ɒ	ɒ
bought	ɑ	ɔ	ɔ	ɔ:
boat	ō	ɔɔ	əʊ	əʊ
put	û	ʊ	ʊ	ʊ
boot	ū	u	u	u:
butt	ə	ʌ	ʌ	ʌ
bite	ɪ	aɪ	aɪ	aɪ
bout	au	aʊ	aʊ	aʊ
boy	oi	ɔɪ	ɔɪ	ɔɪ

Source: Adapted from P. Ladeforged, 1975, p.64.

the second. While a pure vowel has an unchanging quality, which can be prolonged at will, the quality of a gliding vowel is not the same at the end as it was at the beginning. Gliding vowels may be shown as an arrow, which indicates the quality of the starting point and the direction in which the quality change is made (corresponding to the tongue movement). Fig 4 illustrates the English vowels and diphthongs. (Fig. 4)

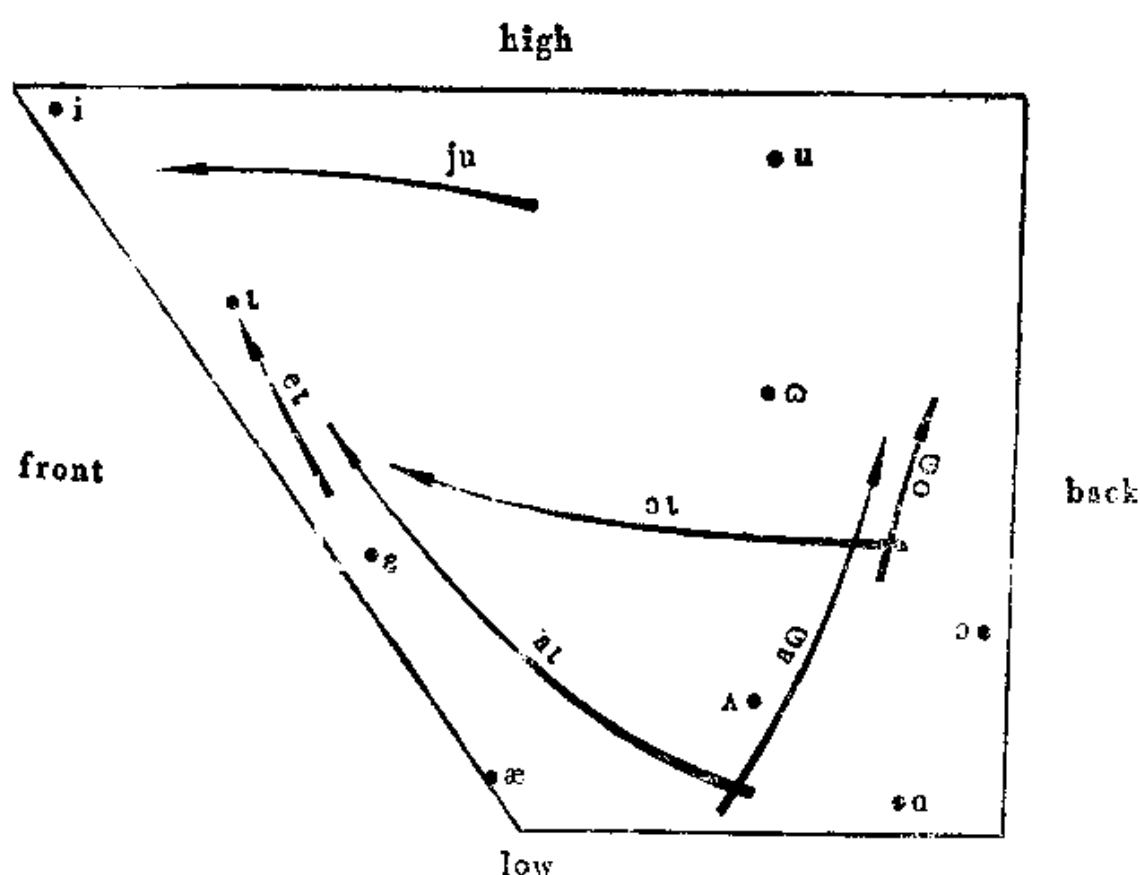


Fig. 4 The relative auditory qualities of some of the vowels of American English.

Source: P. Ladefoged, 1975, p.68

3.5 Phonetic transcription

PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION is a method of writing down

there is only a narrow passage between them, the pressure of the airstream will set them in vibration. That is, they will open slightly to let a small amount of air through, then they will close again, then open afresh, then close again, and so on. The result is a sound similar to what we get by striking a key on a piano. In other words, the sound has a regular waveform and the number of vibrations in a second is fixed, so that we can perceive its pitch. In phonetics, this sound is called VOICE, and sounds produced while the vocal cords are vibrating are called VOICED SOUNDS. Consonants like English [b, m, z] are voiced. Vowels are usually voiced, too.

The PITCH of a sound depends on the rate of vibration of the vocal cords, which in turn is determined by the length of the vocal cords. In male adults the vocal cords are typically longer (about 23 mm) than in women (about 18 mm). Therefore the sounds produced by men have a lower pitch range than those by women.

(3) When the vocal cords are drawn wide apart, as in normal breathing without speaking, the air-stream passes through the glottis freely and produces a faint sound. This sound will become audible if we breathe through the mouth with some strength instead of through the nose. In phonetics, this sound is symbolized by [h]. When the vocal cords are not vibrating at the time of its production, the resultant sound is called a VOICELESS SOUND. Consonants like [f, s, p] are voiceless sounds.

3.2.3 The resonating cavities

Sounds produced by the movement of the vocal cords need to be amplified and further modified in order to be functional in speech. Without the resonating cavities, the vocal cords, like the strings of

3.5.2 Narrow and broad transcriptions

In his *Handbook of Phonetics*, Henry Sweet made a distinction between narrow and broad transcriptions, which he called **NARROW ROMIC** and **BROAD ROMIC**. Narrow Romie is meant to symbolize all the possible speech sounds, including the minute shades, while Broad Romie is intended to indicate only those sounds which are capable of distinguishing one word from another in a given language.

This principle is important and has been incorporated in the opposition between allophonic and phonemic transcriptions. A sound which is capable of distinguishing one word or one shape of a word from another in a given language is a **PHONEME**. The transcription in which only the phonemes are represented is phonemic. The different members of a phoneme, sounds which are phonetically different but do not make one word different from another in meaning, are **ALLOPHONES**. The transcription that shows the allophonic difference is an allophonic transcription. For example, in English, the phoneme /l/ is pronounced differently in *'let*, *play*, *tell*'. The first /l/ is made by raising the front of the tongue to the hard palate, while the vocal cords are vibrating; the second /l/ is made with the same tongue position as the first, but the vocal cords are not vibrating; and the third /l/ is made by raising not only the front but also the back of the tongue while the vocal cords are vibrating. So allophonically they may be transcribed as [l], [l̥], [ɫ] respectively.

When the phonetic symbols are used in the middle of ordinary writing, they must be marked as different from ordinary spelling. They may be italicized, boldfaced, or more commonly, placed in square brackets []. If one wants to show that a symbol is used

to specifically stand for a phoneme in a language, then it is customary to enclose it in oblique strokes / /. The transcriptions in dictionaries used to be phonetic, but are now interpreted as phonemic, as shown in *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

articulatory phonetics	place of articulation
voicing	IPA
consonant	diphthong
articulator	phonetic transcription
manner of articulation	broad transcription
2. What are the articulators used in speech?
3. Why are some sounds voiced and others voiceless?
What causes this difference?
4. Describe the following consonants: t, d, m, n, l, θ, p, g, h.
5. In what ways do vowels differ from each other?
6. What are cardinal vowels?
7. What is the difference between narrow transcription and broad transcription?
8. Circle the words that begin with a sound as required:
 - (a) a bilabial consonant
mad sad bad rad pad had lad
 - (b) a velar consonant
nod god cod pod rod
 - (c) a labiodental consonant

rat fat sat mat chat vat pat

- (d) an alveolar consonant

nick, lick, sick, tick, kick, quick

- (e) a dental consonant

lie buy thigh thy tie rye

- (f) a palato-alveolar consonant

sip ship tip chip lip zip

- (g) a lateral

mull lull hull light

- (h) an approximant

one war yolk rush

9. Circle the words that end with a sound as required:

- (a) a fricative

pay hose tough rice breath push

sing wreath hang cave massage

- (b) a nasal

train bang leaf limb

- (c) a stop

drill pipe fit crab fog ride laugh

rack through tip

- (d) an affricate

rack such ridge booze

10. Circle the words that contain a sound as required:

- (a) a high vowel

mat lot meat mud boot

- (b) a low vowel

reed pad load map crude cod

- (c) a front vowel

fate bought sat bit but bet

(d) a back vowel

paid reap fool top good father

(e) a rounded vowel

who he bus her hit true

11. Name the consonant sounds in the middle of each of the following words as indicated in the example

	Voiced or voiceless	Place of articulation	Manner of articulation
adder	voiced	alveolar	stop
brother			
sunny			
hopper			
itching			
lodger			
calling			
singing			
robber			
ether			
utter			

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4. PHONOLOGY

4.1 Distinctiveness in speech sounds

PHONOLOGY is the study of sound systems—the inventory of distinctive sounds that occur in a language and the patterns into which they fall.

Speech sounds, as we have seen, are different from each other in a number of ways, such as, place of articulation, manner of articulation, voicing, nasality, aspiration, tongue height, etc. Some of the differences are distinctive in that they serve to distinguish between words in a given language. In English, for example, the difference between /p/ and /b/, /i/ and /e/, /n/ and /ŋ/ are distinctive. Substituting one for the other changes the meaning of a word: “*pin*” would become “*bin*”, “*pen*” or “*ping*”. Distinctive sounds of this kind are termed PHONEMES. If a sound difference does not cause a meaning difference in a language, then it is nondistinctive. In the previous chapter, we said that the /l/ in English words “*let*”, “*play*”, “*tell*” are pronounced differently, and the substitution of, say, [ɫ] for [l], would not make a different word, though native speakers may find the pronunciation a bit strange. The nondistinctive sounds are members of the same phoneme, and are known as ALLOPHONES. Different languages have different phonemic systems. A phonemic difference in one language may be allophonic in another. In Chinese, for example, the aspirated [p^h] and the unaspirated [p] are two phonemes. They set apart words like [p^hɪŋ] (“*ping*” or 乒) and [pɪŋ] (“*bing*” or 兵). In

English, however, [p^h] and [p] belong to the same phoneme, each occurring in a particular position. The aspirated [p^h] occurs mostly in the initial position while the unaspirated [p] occurs only after /s/. Phonology, therefore, different from phonetics, is language specific. It deals with speech sounds within the context of a particular language.

4.2 The phoneme theory

The phoneme is the basic unit in phonological analysis. Phonologists, however, differ greatly in regard to the nature and use of the phoneme. Some look upon the phoneme as a physical phonetic entity; some emphasize the functional side of the phoneme; and others take the psychological point of view, maintaining that the phoneme is “a mental reality”, “the intention of the speaker or the impression of the hearer, or both.”^①

4.2.1 Minimal pairs

Strictly speaking, every sound is different from every other sound, even the intended repetition of a sound will be different every time it is produced. If we use instruments to measure them, we shall see that each sound is unique in terms of pitch, loudness, length as well as quality. But in phonology, some of the differences may be ignored. The difference between [l], [ɫ] and [t] in English, for example, is not significant for meaning. The phonologist is more concerned with the sound differences that are significant, or technically, distinctive.

To find out the distinctive sounds, the customary practice is to try to find MINIMAL PAIRS—word forms which differ from each

① By Badouin de Courtenay, requoted from Hyman, 1975:72.

other only by one sound. For example, in English, “*pin*” and “*bin*”, “*pin*” and “*pen*” and “*pin*” and “*ping*”, are each a minimal pair. As the substitution of [b] for [p^h], [e] for [i], or [ŋ] for [n] changes the meaning of the word concerned, the pairs of [p^h] and [b], [i] and [e], [n] and [ŋ] are each said to be in **CONTRASTIVE DISTRIBUTION**. Sounds in contrastive distribution should be assigned to different phonemes, so [p^h], [b], [i], [e], [n], [ŋ] in English belong to different phonemes, which are transcribed as /p/, /b/, /i/, /e/, /n/, /ŋ/.

4.2.2 Free variation

If, however, two sounds occurring in the same environment do not contrast, that is, the substitution of one for the other does not produce a different word form, but merely a different pronunciation of the same word, then the two sounds are in **FREE VARIATION**. For example, the plosives in English may not be exploded when they occur before another plosive or a nasal, such as in the words and phrases “*act*”, “*apt*”, “*that boy*”, “*good morning*”. These unexploded plosives may be transcribed as [k^o], [p^o], [t^o], [d^o], with a raised circle on the right. These unexploded plosives are in free variation with their exploded counterparts, as in careful speech it is perfectly normal to use the exploded ones. Sounds in free variation should be assigned to the same phoneme.

4.2.3 Complementary distribution

Not all the speech sounds occur in the same environment. When two sounds never occur in the same environment, they are said to be in **COMPLEMENTARY DISTRIBUTION**. For example, in English, the aspirated plosives [p^h], [t^h], [k^h] never occur

after /s/, and the unaspirated ones [p], [t], [k] never occur initially, such as in the pairs “*spot*” and “*pot*”; “*stop*” and “*top*”, “*school*” and “*cool*”, etc. Sounds in complementary distribution may be assigned to the same phoneme, as is the case with the English [p^h] and [p], [t^h] and [t], and [k^h] and [k]. The allophones [ɪ], [ɪ̯], [ɪ̯] of /ɪ/ are also in complementary distribution. They never occur in the same environment. The clear [ɪ] occurs only before a vowel, such as in the words “*light*”, “*glad*”, “*failure*”; and the voiceless [ɪ̯] occurs only after a voiceless consonant, such as in the words “*please*”, “*butler*”, “*clear*”; and the dark [ɪ̯] occurs only after a vowel or as a syllabic sound after a consonant, such as in the words “*feet*”, “*help*”, “*middle*”. But complementary distribution is not the only condition to identify two sounds as of the same phoneme. They must satisfy some other conditions as well.

4.2.4 Phonetic similarity

One condition for two sounds in complementary distribution to belong to the same phoneme is that they must be phonetically similar. One well-known case in this regard is the English sounds [h] and [ŋ]. In terms of distribution, they are complementary to each other: [h] occurs only at the beginning of a syllable, such as in the words “*head*”, “*heart*”, “*enhance*”, “*perhaps*”, and [ŋ] always occurs at the end of a syllable, such as in the words “*sing*”, “*long*”, “*language*”, “*finger*”, etc. But they are not assigned to the same phoneme in English, because phonetically speaking, [h] and [ŋ] have little in common except that they are both consonants. [h] is voiceless while [ŋ] is voiced; [h] is a fricative while [ŋ] is a (nasal) plosive; [h] is oral while [ŋ] is nasal; [h] is glottal while [ŋ] is velar.

PHONETIC SIMILARITY, however, is largely a matter of

degree. It is difficult to decide to what extent the similarity counts. And when a sound is similar to two other sounds, it is difficult to decide which of the two it should be grouped together with.

4.2.5 Pattern congruity

In cases like the English unaspirated [p], [t], [k], we must take into consideration the general pattern of the phonemes in the language. If we choose to classify them with [b], [d], [g], that is, to assign them as allophones of /b/, /d/, /g/, then we should have to transcribe [spɒt] phonemically as /sbɒt/, [stop] as /sdɒp/, and [skud] as /sgu:d/. In other words, we would have to recognize that there are consonant clusters consisting of a voiceless fricative and a voiced plosive in English. However this recognition is contrary to the general pattern in English, namely, in consonant clusters of plosives and fricatives, they usually share the same voice feature, either both are voiced or both are voiceless. What is more, in view of the totality of the phonemes in English, the feature of voice is more important than the feature of aspiration. There are fricatives distinguished by the presence or absence of voice, such as /f/, /v/; /θ/, /ð/; /s/, /z/; /ʃ/, /ʒ/. But the feature of aspiration plays no part in distinguishing between any other phonemes. Therefore it is preferable to classify [p], [t], [k] with [p^h], [t^h], [k^h].

The term **PATTERN CONGRUITY** has also been used in the sense that other things being equal, the more symmetrical a phonological system is the better. In English, there is a pair of affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. Why do we not treat them as combinations of single phonemes in the way [ts] and [dz] are treated? The reason is as follows: the sound [ʃ] is used very frequently in English, we have words “catch” [kætʃ], “cat” [kæt], as well as “cash” [kæʃ]; and “chip” [tʃɪp], “tip” [tɪp],

as well as “ship” [ʃɪp]. But the sound [ʒ] has a limited occurrence. It only occurs in some particular contexts. We have words “jog” [dʒɒg], “dog” [dɒg], but not [ʒɒg]; or “ridge” [rɪdʒ], “rid” [rɪd], but not [rɪʒ]. It appears that the sound [dʒ] should be treated as a single phoneme while [tʃ] could be treated as a combination of two phonemes. But if we did that, the pattern of English consonants would appear asymmetrical:

p, t, k, f, θ, s, ʃ
b, d, g, v, ð, z, ʒ, dʒ

on the grounds of pattern congruity, therefore, [tʃ] is better treated as a single phoneme too.

4.3 A functional approach

A functional approach towards the concept of phoneme was proposed by the Prague School, a group of linguists active in the 20s and 30s of this century at Prague. They declare: “The phoneme can be defined satisfactorily neither on the basis of its psychological nature nor on the basis of its relation to the phonetic variants, but purely and solely on the basis of its function in the system of language.” (Nikolai Trubetzkoy, *Principles of Phonology*: 41)

Prague School linguists developed a comprehensive theory on phonology. In this chapter we shall touch upon only two of their viewpoints: (1) neutralization and archiphoneme; and (2) distinctive features.

4.3.1 Neutralization and Archiphoneme

Phonemes are capable of distinguishing between different words because they themselves are different from one another. This difference between phonemes is called phonological opposition in the

Prague School.

In their discussion of phonological oppositions, they notice that some oppositions are effective in all contexts and some are effective only in certain contexts. They call the former type constant opposition and the latter neutralizable opposition. For example, in English, /p/ and /b/ are two distinctive sounds; substituting one for the other generally changes the meaning of a word. But in the context of /s-/, this opposition is lost, i.e. neutralized. No two English words are distinguished by the presence of /sp/ in one and the presence of /sb/ in the other. There is only one sound occurring after /s/, whether it is grouped with the phoneme /p/ or /b/.

In Prague School phonology, a phoneme is defined by the opposition it enters. Since the opposition is different when it is neutralized from when it is not, the phoneme in the neutralized position cannot be the same as the phoneme in the non-neutralized position. That is to say, the English phoneme occurring after /s/ should not be the same as either /p/ or /b/. Prague School linguists use a special symbol for it — the capitalized /P/, and term it **ARCHIPHONEME**.

4.3.2 Distinctive features

In discussing phonological oppositions, Prague School linguists also realize that not all the phonetic properties of a sound are phonologically relevant. And a phoneme should contain only the phonologically relevant properties. For example, in English, the sound [p^h] contains the phonetic properties of voicelessness, bilabiality, plosiveness, and aspiration, etc. But only the first three are phonologically relevant, which differentiate it from /t/ (a voiceless alveolar plosive), /m/ (a voiced bilabial nasal), and /b/ (a voiced

bilabial plosive). Aspiration in [p^h] is phonologically irrelevant. It does not enter a phonological opposition: there are no words which are differentiated by this phonetic property in English. So the English phoneme /p/ contains only voicelessness, bilabiality, and plosiveness. In other words, a phoneme is the sum of the phonologically relevant properties of a sound. Thus, the phoneme, though defined as the minimal unit in terms of linearity, i.e. not successively divisible, can nevertheless be analysed into smaller components simultaneously. These smaller components of a phoneme are technically termed **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES**.

Prague School linguists propose that the phonological oppositions in the world's languages could be accounted for by twelve distinctive features. These features have three characteristics. First, they are phonological. They do not represent all the possible phonetic oppositions, but only the phonologically relevant ones. Second, they are all binary. A sound has either a positive or a negative value of a feature. It cannot be something in between. It is a question of "yes" or "no", not of "more" or "less". Third, they are both acoustically and articulatorily based. For instance, the feature grave/acute is defined in acoustic terms by whether there is a concentration of energy in the lower or upper frequencies of the spectrum; and in articulatory terms by whether the peripheral or medial part of the oral cavity is active in the production of the sound. That is why labial and velar consonants such as the English /p/, /b/, /m/, /f/, /v/, /k/, /g/, /n/ are grouped together.

4.4 Suprasegmental phonology

SUPRASEGMENTAL PHONOLOGY refers to the study of phonological properties of units larger than the segment — phoneme,

such as the syllable, word and sentence.

4.4.1 The syllable

The SYLLABLE consists of three parts: the ONSET, the PEAK and the CODA. In a syllable such as /mæn/, /m/ is the onset, /æ/ is the peak, and /n/ is the coda. The peak is the essential part, which a syllable must contain, while the onset and coda are margins, which may be absent from it. The peak is usually formed by a vowel, hence the symbol V. But in words such as 'apple', 'hidden' and 'rhythm', /l/, /n/ and /m/ also function as peaks. They are said to be syllabic and symbolized as /l/, /n/ and /m/. A syllable without a coda, that is, a syllable ending in a vowel, is an OPEN SYLLABLE. And a syllable checked or arrested by a consonant is a CLOSED SYLLABLE. In closed syllables any vowel can occur. But in stressed open syllables, only tense vowels, traditionally known as long vowels and diphthongs, occur; the lax vowels, /i/, /e/, /æ/, /u/, /ʌ/ in English, never do.

Each syllable has one and only one peak, therefore when there are two vowels in a word, they must be separated into two syllables. But there is no general restriction on the number of consonants in a syllable. Different languages have different syllable structures. Chinese has the syllable structure CV, VC and CVC, or (C)V(C). There may be one consonant before and/or after the peak. But the consonant occurring after the peak is restricted to /n/ and /ŋ/ in Standard Chinese. In English there may be at most three consonants before the peak and four after it — CCCVCCCC. An example of four consonants occurring after the peak is the word 'sixths' /sɪksθs/. There are 24 consonants in English but only a limited few can co-occur as three consonant CLUSTERS in the

syllable initial position. They are:

$$s + \begin{Bmatrix} p \\ t \\ k \end{Bmatrix} + \begin{Bmatrix} r \\ l \\ j \\ w \end{Bmatrix}$$

This means the first consonant of a three consonant cluster **must** be /s/; the second may be /p/, /t/, or /k/; and the third may be /r/, /l/, /j/, or /w/; as exemplified in words “*spring*”, “*split*”, “*strike*”, “*student*”, “*screw*”, “*sclera*”, “*skew*”, and “*square*”.

This study of syllable structure, the possible combinations of phonemes, is known as PHONOTACTICS, or SYNTAGMATIC PHONOLOGY.

4.4.2 Stress

The principal suprasegmental features are STRESS, LENGTH, PITCH, and concurrent patternings of three are collectively known as INTONATION. Length is more straightforward, so we shall concentrate on stress and pitch in the following sections.

STRESS is a feature for which the smallest unit of application is the syllable. When we say a certain syllable is stressed, we mean it is pronounced with a relatively greater amount of energy. The air is pushed out of the lungs with more effort, and the vocal organs perform their actions with more vigour. The result is that the stressed syllable sounds louder than the unstressed. According to the context of discussion, that is, whether stress is considered in the context of the word in isolation or in the context of connected speech, stress can be divided into two types: word stress and sentence stress.^①

① There is also syntagme stress, as found in French.

4.4.2.1 Word stress

Stress is a relative notion. A syllable can be stressed only when there is another syllable which is not stressed. So monosyllabic words cannot be said to have WORD STRESS.

In some languages the position of the syllable in a word determines whether it is stressed. For example, in Hungarian, stress always falls on the first syllable of a word; in Turkish, it is always on the last syllable; and in Polish, it is always on the penultimate (i.e. next to the last) syllable. These languages are said to have fixed stress. In other languages, stress is free in that it is not tied to any particular syllable of a word. It may fall on the first syllable in some words, on the second in others, and on the third in still others. Languages like Russian and English are of this type.

In languages of fixed stress, stress is predictable on the basis of phonological facts. When we know the number of syllable in a word, we know where to place the stress. With languages of free stress, that is not possible. But it does not follow that stress is totally unpredictable in these languages. There are other factors which determine the placement of stress.

First, the syntactic class of a word provides some clue to the position of stress. In English, for example, a different syllable is stressed when a word is used as a noun from when it is a verb. The noun has the stress on the first syllable, and the verb has the stress on the second syllable, which is exemplified in these words: “*combine*”, “*convict*”, “*insult*”, “*produce*”, “*rebel*”, “*refuse*”.

Similar alternations of stress occur between compounds and phrases in English. A “*blackbird*”, with the first element stressed, is a compound referring to a particular kind of bird, which may not necessarily be black in colour; but a “*black bird*”, with the second

element stressed, is a phrase, capable of referring to any kind of bird which is black in colour. A "*hot dog*" with the first element stressed is a kind of food consisting of a sausage in a bread roll; and a "*hot dog*" with the second element stressed is an overheated animal. The same difference is shown in "*greenhouse*" and "*green house*". One may notice that the first element of these pairs of words has a different function in the two members. In the first member, "*black*", "*hot*", and "*green*" are adjectives, but they are more noun-like, related closely to the second element as part of a compound. In the second member, "*black*", "*hot*", and "*green*" are true adjectives, indicating a property of the second element.

Second, the morphological make-up of a word affects its stress pattern. For example, in English words with the following endings, the main stress falls on the preceding syllable: *-ity*, *-ion*, *-ian*, *-ic*, *-ify* (Verb), *-ible*, *-igible*, *-ish*. And verbs of three or more syllables ending in "*-ate*", throw the main stress back two syllables, whereas verbs of two syllables ending in "*-ate*" place the stress on "*-ate*".

4.4.2.2 Sentence stress

SENTENCE STRESS differs from word stress in two ways: (1) monosyllabic words may take sentence stress, (2) polysyllabic words may have the stress on a different syllable from where it is in isolation or they may lose it completely. Sentence stress is not wholly random either; there are also rules to follow.

First, sentence stress depends on the relative importance of the word. The more important a word is, the stronger is its stress. In English the important words are usually (in the absence of special emphasis) nouns, adjectives, main verbs, adverbs and demonstrative pronouns. Other categories of words, for example, auxiliary

verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, etc. are not normally stressed.

Second, rhythmic considerations influence the placement of stress. In stress-timed languages like English, where stressed syllables tend to recur at regular intervals of time, the stress pattern is especially affected by the rhythm. For example, there is a stress on the first syllable of each of the words "*Mary*", "*younger*", "*brother*", "*wanted*", "*fifty*", "*chocolate*", "*peanuts*". But when they form a sentence "*Mary's younger brother wanted fifty chocolate peanuts*", only the alternate word is stressed. There is a tendency to avoid having stresses too close together. Stressed words are usually interposed by unstressed words. This tendency may cause a word to be stressed on one syllable in one sentence and on another or none at all in another sentence. The word "*fifteen*" is stressed on the first syllable in "*She's fifteen years old*"; yet in "*She's only fifteen*", it is stressed on the second syllable. The word 'went' is stressed in "*He went away*", but unstressed in "*John went away*".

Third, the syntactic structure of a sentence has a bearing on its stress pattern. For example, phrases of a parenthetical nature are often unstressed. In the English sentences "*Has he gone to town this morning?*" "*How do you do, Mr. Smith?*" and "*'Yes', he said*"; the words "*this morning*", "*Mr. Smith*" and "*he said*" usually do not receive stress.

4.4.3 Pitch

PITCH is another suprasegmental feature, whose smallest domain of application is the syllable. When the vocal cords are loosely closed, the air from the lungs will set them in vibration. Different rates of vibration produce what is known in acoustic terms as different frequencies, and in auditory terms as different pitches.

Pitch variations may be distinctive like phonemes, that is, they may contribute to distinguish between different words. In this function, pitch variations are called TONES, and languages using tones are called TONE LANGUAGES, of which Chinese is one.

4.4.4 Intonation

When pitch, stress and length variations are tied to the sentence rather than to the word, they are collectively known as INTONATION.

Intonation has four grammatical functions:

First, it may indicate different sentence types by pitch direction. The same sequence of words said with a falling intonation is usually interpreted as a statement, while said with a rising intonation it is usually interpreted as a question. In tag questions, one asks for confirmation with a falling tone, and asks for information with a rising tone.

Second, sometimes the different pitch direction may indicate connotative meanings. The sentence "*I can't eat anything*" equals to "*I can eat nothing*" when said with a falling tone on "*anything*", but it means "I can only eat some particular things" when said with a fall-rise tone on "*anything*".

Third, it may impose different structure on the sentence by dividing it into different intonation units. For example, if "*John didn't come because of Mary*" is said within one intonation unit, the adverbial "*because of Mary*" is in the same structure with "*not*" and negated by it, so it means "John came, but it had nothing to do with Mary". On the other hand, if it is said with two intonation units, divided between "*come*" and "*because*", "*not*" negates "*come*", and it means "Mary was the reason why John didn't come". In

"Those who bought quickly made a profit", where to draw the boundary determines who actually made a profit; whether it is "those who bought" or "those who bought quickly". It is here that tone units go hand in hand with pause,

Fourth, intonation may bring part of a sentence into prominence by placing the nucleus (the major pitch change) on the syllable concerned. Stress, intonation and length can all make a word more prominent than the quality of its component sounds allows. But of these three, intonation is the most effective means while stress is the least, in spite of the erroneous assumption that the sole function of stress is to give emphasis to a word. Whenever one wants to emphasize something, one always attaches to it the major pitch change (the change of direction from low to high, or from high to low) in addition to giving more force to it in its production. For the sentence *"Jack likes fish"*, there may be the following three different stress and intonation patterns and each of these three means something different: (• stands for stressed, ° for unstressed, and " ^ " for the major pitch change):

Jack	likes	fish
•	°	•
•	°	°
•	•	°

Intonation also has attitudinal functions. It may indicate the emotional state of the speaker—whether he is calm or excited, happy or sad. Many phoneticians tried to establish correlations between

intonation patterns and attitudes expressed. For example, the falling tone indicates matter-of-fact statements, downright assertions, commands; the rising tone indicates politeness, encouragement, pleading and so on. But these can only be very general indications. The specific attitudinal meaning of an intonation pattern must be interpreted within a context, both of the situation and of the speaker's personality. It may well happen that an intonation pattern which is neutral in one set of circumstances might be offensive or patronizing when used by another person or in other circumstances.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

allophone	distinctive feature
phoneme	suprasegmental
minimal pair	syllable
free variation	stress
complementary	pitch
distribution	
2. Answer the following questions.
 - A. How is a phoneme different from a speech sound?
 - B. Under what conditions will two sounds be assigned to the same phoneme?
 - C. How do we determine sentence stress?
 - D. What are the grammatical functions of intonation?
3. Transcription
 - A. Which of the two transcriptions below is the narrower?

Betty cried as she left in the red plane.

(a) ['beti: 'kraɪd əz ʃi 'left ɪn ðə 'red 'pleɪn]

(b) ['bedi: 'kraɪd əz ʃi 'left ɪ ðə 'red 'pleɪn]

B. State rules for converting the transcription

(a) into that in (b). Make your rules as general as possible, so that they cover not only this pair of transcriptions but also other similar sentences.

ex. [t]→[d] when it occurs after a stressed vowel and before an unstressed vowel.

- (a) _____
(b) _____
(c) _____
(d) _____

4. Decide whether the underlined vowels are stressed(S), unstressed (U) or reduced(R).

ex. depreciate (S) create (U) deprecate (R)

(a) implicit () simplistic () implication ()

(b) explanation () chaotic () explain ()

(c) tempestuous (U) allegation () allege ()

(d) fantastic () emphasis () emphatic ()

(e) demonstrable () prognosis () demonstration ()

(f) confront () confrontation () umbrella ()

(g) confirmation () verbose () confirm ()

(h) recitation () recite () citation ()

(i) computation () circular () compute ()

5. Identify the features that can distinguish the following pairs of expressions.

ex. a gray train/a great rain released vs unreleased /t/

- (a) I scream/ice cream _____
- (b) a tall/at all _____
- (c) a name/an aim _____
- (d) for getting/forgetting _____
- (e) frontier/front tier _____
- (f) Bett's bread/bedspread _____

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5. MORPHOLOGY

5.1 Morphology

MORPHOLOGY is the branch of grammar which studies the internal structure of words, and of the rules by which words are formed. For example, the verb “*purify*” in English consists of two orthographic parts: “*pur(e)*” and “*-ify*”, from which one can work out a rule: a new form of verb can be formed by adding ‘*-ify*’ to an adjective. This morphological rule accounts for the existence of a set of verbs with “*-ify*” ending, such as “*amplify*”, “*simplify*”, “*falsify*”.

Morphology is generally divided into two fields: the study of INFLECTIONS (also called INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY), and of WORD-FORMATION (often referred to as LEXICAL or DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY).

5.1.1 Inflection

INFLECTION is the manifestation of grammatical relationships through the addition of inflectional affixes, such as number, person, finiteness, aspect and case, which do not change the grammatical class of the stems (See 5.3.4) to which they are attached. For instance,

ex. 5—1

- (a) number table/tables_
 apple/apples_
 car/cars_

- (b) person, finiteness and aspect
 talk/talks/talking/talked
 open/opens/opening/opened
 shout/shouts/shouting/shouted
- (c) case boy/boy's
 John/John's
 university/university's

Each set in example 5—1 constitutes a single paradigm, that is, a set of grammatically conditioned forms all derived from a single root (See 5.3.2) or stem.

5.1.2 Word-formation

WORD-FORMATION, in its restricted sense, refers to the processes of word variations signalling lexical relationships. It can be further subclassified into the compositional type (compound) and the derivational type (derivation).

5.1.2.1 Compound

The term COMPOUND covers a wide range of different relations between lexical words. For instance,

ex. 5—2

(a) Noun compounds

- day + break → daybreak (N + V)
 play + boy → playboy (V + N)
 hair — cut → haircut (N + V)
 call + girl → callgirl (V + N)
 wind + mill → windmill (N + N)

(b) Verb compounds

- brain + wash → brainwash (N + V)

lip+read → lipread (N+V)

baby+sit → babysit (N+V)

(c) Adjective compounds

man+eating → maneating (N+Ving)

heart+felt → heartfelt (N+Ved)

duty+free → dutyfree (N+Adj)

(d) Preposition compounds

in+to → into

through+out → throughout

5.1.2.2 Derivation

Different from compounds, DERIVATION shows the relation between stems and affixes.

For instance,

ex. 5—3

un+conscious → unconscious

nation+al → national

national+ize → nationalize

nationalize+ation → nationalization

In contrast with inflections, derivations can make the word class of the original word either **changed** or **unchanged**. For instance,

ex. 5—4

(a) Word class changed

N → V length+en → lengthen

hospital+ize → hospitalize

un+horse → unhorse

dis+card → discard

N → Adj fool+ish → foolish

		beast + ly → beastly
		delight + ful → delightful
		speech + less → speechless
		virtue + ous → virtuous
N → Adj/Adv		clock + wise → clockwise
		earth + ward → earthward
V → N		work + er → worker
		pay + ee → payee
		inhabit + ant → inhabitant
V → Adj		accept + able → acceptable
		adore + able → adorable
Adj → N		mean + ness → meanness
		rapid + ity → rapidity
Adj → V		deaf + en → deafen
		sweet + en → sweeten
Adj → Adv		exact + ly → exactly
		quick + ly → quickly
(b)	Word class	unchanged
N → N		non + smoker → nonsmoker
		ex + president → expresident
		profit + eer → profiteer
		book + let → booklet
V → V		dis + obey → disobey
		un + do → undo
Adj → Adj		tall + ish → tallish
		il + logical → illogical

5.2 Word and morpheme

5.2.1 Morpheme

The MORPHEME is the smallest unit in terms of relationship between expression and content, a unit which cannot be divided without destroying or drastically altering the meaning, whether it is lexical or grammatical. For instance, the word “barks” in “*The dog barks*” consists of two morphemes in orthographic forms: “bark” and “-s”, neither of which can be further divided into other smaller meaningful units. Therefore, a morpheme is the minimal unit of meaning. It is not like the sound patterns or syllables which can be further divided into segments. The fact that there are three phonetic segments in /bɑ:k/ is a case in point.

Words may consist of one morpheme or more than one morphemes. Here are some examples:

ex. 5---5

1—morpheme	boy, desire
2—morpheme	boy +ish, desir(e) +able
3—morpheme	boy + ish +ness, desir(e) + abl(e) +ity
4—morpheme	gentle +man + li +ness; un +desir(e) + able +ity
5—morpheme	un +gentle +man + li +ness
over 5—morpheme	anti +dis +establish +ment +ari +an +ism

5.2.2 Morpheme and phoneme

A single phoneme may represent a single morpheme, but they are not identical. The phoneme /z/ in /gəʊz/ (goes) represents the third-person singular present tense morpheme, but /z/ occurs very often when it has nothing to do with this specific morpheme. See

the following examples:

ex. 5—6

(a) boys /bɔɪz/

(b) boy's /bɔɪz/

(c) raise /reɪz/

In (a), the phoneme /z/ represents the plural morpheme, whereas in (b), it represents the morpheme which means possessive case. However, in (c), it means nothing at all.

5.2.3 Morphemic structure and phonological structure

Morphemes may also be represented by phonological structures other than a single phoneme. The following examples show that they may be monophonemic, monosyllabic or polysyllabic.

ex. 5—7

Monophonemic dogs /dɒgz/

Monosyllabic love + ly /'lʌv + li/

Polysyllabic tobacco /tə'bæ + kəʊ/

The syllabic (phonological) structure of a word and its morphemic (grammatical) structure do not necessarily correspond. For instance,

ex. 5—8

tell + er /'te + lə/

big(g) + er /'bɪ + gə/

5.2.4 Allomorph

Some morphemes have a single form in all contexts, such as “dog”, “bark”, “cat”, etc. In other instances there may be considerable variation, that is, a morpheme may have alternate shapes or phonetic forms. Let us first have a look at the morpheme which expresses plurality in English.

- ex. 5—9 map maps /mæps/
 dog—dogs /dogz/
 watch—watches /wɒtʃiz/
 mouse—mice /mais/
 ox—oxen /'aksn/
 tooth—teeth /ti:θ/
 sheep—sheep /ʃi:p/

From the examples, one can see clearly that the plural meaning in English can be represented by the voiceless /s/, the voiced /z/, the vowel-consonant structure /iz/, the diphthong /aɪ/ found in the irregular form of /maɪs/, the nasal sound /n/ in /'aksn/, the long vowel /i:/ in /tɪ:θ/ and the zero form $\emptyset$ of /ʃi:p/ and others. Each would be said to be an ALLOMORPH of the plural morpheme.

Thus, morpheme, like phoneme, as held by American structuralists, is an abstract unit, but on a higher level of abstraction. It consists of a sequence of classes of phonemes and has either lexical or grammatical meaning. In morphemic transcription, morphemes in the abstract notion are put between braces like { }. Take the plural morpheme for example, it can be expressed in the form of {-s ~ -z ~ -iz ~ -aɪ ~ -i: ~ -n ~ $\emptyset$ }.

It is to be noted that some morphemic shapes represent different morphemes and thus have different meanings. As illustrated in ex. 5—1, the morphemic shape '-s' can express plurality (e.g. tables, apples, cars), person's finiteness (e.g. talks, opens, shouts) and case (e.g. boy's, John's, university's).

5.3 Types of morphemes

5.3.1 Free morpheme and bound morpheme

A FREE MORPHEME is one that may constitute a word (free form) by itself, such as “*bed*”, “*tree*”, “*sing*”, “*dance*”.

A BOUND MORPHEME is one that may appear with at least one other morpheme, such as “-s” in “*dogs*”, “-al” in “*national*”, “dis-” in “*disclose*”, and so on. They cannot stand by themselves. Thus, the word “*distempered*” has three morphemes, namely, “dis-”, “temper”, and “-ed”, of which “temper” is a free morpheme, “dis-” and “-ed” are two bound morphemes. In other words, all monomorphemic words are constituted by free morphemes. Those polymorphemic words which consist wholly of free morphemes are called compounds, such as “*paymaster*”, “*moonwalk*”, “*babysit*”, “*godfather*”, “*sunflower*”.

5.3.2 Roots

Polymorphemic words other than compounds may divide into ROOTS and AFFIXES.

A root is the base form of a word which cannot be further analysed without total loss of identity. That is to say, it is that part of the word left when all the affixes are removed. In the word “*internationalism*”, after the removal of “*inter-*”, “*-al*” and “*-ism*”, what is left is the root ‘nation’.

Free root morphemes are those that can stand by themselves such as “*black*” in “*black*”, “*blackbird*”, “*blackboard*”, “*blacksmith*”. Morphemes of this type are potentially unlimited in number in a language.

However, there are relatively few bound root morphemes in

English, such as “-ceive” in “receive”, “perceive”; “conceive”; “-mit” in “remit”, “permit”, “commit”, “submit”; “-tain” in “retain”, “contain”, “maintain”; “cur” in “incur”, “recur”, “occur”, etc.

A few English roots may have both bound and free variants. As we know, “sleep” (/sli:p/) and “child” (/tʃaɪld/) are free root morphemes, whereas “slep-” in the former’s past tense form “slept” and “child- (/tʃɪld-/)” in the latter’s plural form “children” cannot exist by themselves.

All words may be said to contain a root morpheme.

Roots involving total variation among their allomorphs are called SUPPLETIVES, such as ‘wen-’ in ‘went’.^①

5.3.3 Affix

AFFIX is the collective term for the type of formative that can be used only when added to another morpheme (the root or stem). Naturally, affixes belong to the type of “bound” morphemes.

Affixes are limited in number in a language, and are generally classified into three subtypes namely, prefix, suffix and infix, depending on their position with reference to the root or stem of the word:

ex. 5—10

prefix	para-, mini-, un-
suffix	-ise, -tion
infix ^①	<u>fo</u> ot/ <u>fe</u> et, <u>go</u> ose/ <u>ge</u> ese

① This is the view held by linguists who follow the ITEM-and-ARRANGEMENT analysis, in which words are seen as linear sequences (arrangements) of morphs (items). Other approaches are ITEM-and-PROCESS analysis (the relationships between words are seen as process

5.3.4 Root and stem

A STEM is any morpheme or combination of morphemes to which an affix can be added. "*Friend-*" in "*friends*" and "*friend-**ship-*" in "*friendships*" are both stems. The former shows that a stem can be equivalent to a root, whereas the latter shows that a stem may contain two or more roots, i.e., compound, such as "*blackbird*", "*girlfriend*", "*fighter-bomber*". "*paper-clip*", "*landlord*", "*mail-man*".

It should be noted that certain affixes function primarily to form stems. They may be called STEM-FORMATIVES. In the word "*thermos*", "*-s*" originally indicated the root in question can be the subject of a sentence, but it cannot be attached to the Greek root "*therm*" directly, it is the stem-formative "*-o-*" that helps turn the root "*therm*" into a stem "*thermo-*", to which the morpheme "*-s*" is attached. More examples can be seen in words like "*morphology*", "*geometry*", "*biology*", "*philosophy*".

Affixes may also be divided into inflectional and derivational types. For instance,

ex. 5—11

Inflectional	Derivational
walk <u>s</u>	sleep <u>y</u>
walk <u>ed</u>	lovely <u>y</u>
walk <u>ing</u>	notional <u>al</u>
	mean <u>ness</u>
star <u>s</u>	amazement <u>ment</u>
watch <u>es</u>	disun <u>ity</u>

of derivation) and WORD and-PARADIGM model (the word is seen as the basic unit of analysis, operating within a set of variables which constitute a paradigm).

sweeten
president's

5.4 Morphophonology and morphophonemics

MORPHOPHONOLOGY (morphonology) or MORPHOPHONEMICS (morphonemics) is a branch of linguistics referring to the analysis and classification of the phonological factors which affect the appearance of morphemes, and, correspondingly, the grammatical factors which affect the appearance of phonemes. At any rate, it studies the interrelationships between phonology and morphology.

5.4.1 Phonologically conditioned

The form or shape of morphemes may be conditioned by phonological factors. Compare the following two sets of words:

ex. 5—12

<u>i</u> njustice	<u>i</u> mperfect
<u>i</u> nefficient	<u>i</u> mpenetrable
<u>i</u> nfirm	<u>i</u> mpossible

The negative morpheme is realized as “in-” or “im-” in the two sets respectively. The reason is very simple, because the change of /n/ (an alveolar nasal) to /m/ (a bilabial nasal) in the right column words makes it more similar to /p/ (a bilabial stop). Therefore, the ASSIMILATION of /n/ is said to be conditioned by /p/.

Opposite to assimilation, there is DISSIMILATION, which refers to the influence exercised by one sound segment upon the articulation of another, so that the sounds become less alike, or different. For instance,

ex. 5—13

grammar (O.E.) → glammor (M.E.)
peregrinus (Latin) → pillgrim

marbre (French) → marble

In all these examples, one of the phonemes, /r/, dissimilates to /l/ in the course of time, which results in the change of morphemes concerned.

5.4.2 Morphologically conditioned

Morphemes can also be conditioned by morphological factors. In doing so, three requirements should be met:

(a) All the allomorphs should have common meaning, for instance, the plural morpheme {-z~-s~-iz~-at~-ø~-n}

(b) All the allomorphs should be in complementary distribution, for instance, the plural morpheme {-n} occurs only with a limited number of words such as "ox", "brother", etc.

(c) Allomorphs which share the common meaning should occur in parallel formations. For instance,

ex. 5--14

Singular	Plural
<u>ox</u> / <u>aks</u> /	<u>oxen</u> / <u>aksn</u> /
<u>cow</u> / <u>kau</u> /	<u>cows</u> / <u>kauz</u> /

This suggests that /n/ and /z/ have the same functional place in the grammatical structure of the language.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms

morpheme	compound
inflection	affix
derivation	root
suppletive	stem

allomorph bound

2. Complete the words with suitable negative prefixes.

a. ____ removable	g. ____ human
b. ____ formal	h. ____ relevant
c. ____ practicable	i. ____ evitable
d. ____ sensible	j. ____ mobile
e. ____ tangible	k. ____ legal
f. ____ logical	l. ____ discreet
3. Describe the morphological rules concerned in exercise 2, the relevant conditioning process, and the morpheme which carries the common negative meaning.
4. Break up each of the following words into its parts and put the morphemes correctly in one of the columns:

	Free	Bound	
		Inflectional	Derivational
a. luxurious	_____	_____	_____
b. pauperize	_____	_____	_____
c. begin	_____	_____	_____
d. buyers	_____	_____	_____
e. disenchanted	_____	_____	_____
f. scarcity	_____	_____	_____
g. bystander	_____	_____	_____
h. sooner	_____	_____	_____
i. reassuringly	_____	_____	_____
j. insalivation	_____	_____	_____

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6. LEXICON

6.1 Lexicon

LEXICON, in its most general sense, is synonymous with vocabulary. In its technical sense here, lexicon deals with the analysis and creation of words, idioms and collocations.

Lexicon is to be distinguished from syntax, the association of the latter being purely syntactic. In this sense, morphology is partly related to lexicon, partly to syntax.

6.2 Word

The WORD is a unit of expression which has universal intuitive recognition by native-speakers, whether it is expressed in spoken or written form. This definition is, perhaps, a bit vague, as there are different criteria with regard to its identification and definition. It follows that it is hard to define "word" linguistically. Nevertheless, it is agreed that three senses are involved in defining "word", none of which, of course, is satisfactory to cope with all the situations.

6.2.1 Three senses of "word"

6.2.1.1 A physically definable unit

Although language is represented as a continuous stretch of utterance or writing, one can still find pauses and blanks every now and then. Thus, word is a series of sound segments or letters be-

tween two pauses or blanks.

ex. 6—1

Phonological: /ɪt ɪz 'wʌndəfəl/

Orthographic: It is wonderful.

Based on the above criterion, three words in each case are recognized. However, in casual speech or writing, one tends to give expression to the same ideas as follows:

ex. 6—2

Phonological: /ɪts 'wʌndəfəl/

Orthographic: It's wonderful.

When liaison and contracted form occur in ex. 6—2, and they do occur very often in speech and writing, do we recognize them as three words or two words?

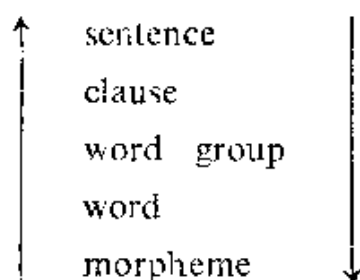
6.2.1.2 The common factor underlying a set of forms

When one is faced with a set of verbs, such as “*check*”, “*checks*”, “*checked*”, “*checking*”, they are recognized as four words in the frequency count of a piece of writing or an utterance. However, they are regarded as one word in a dictionary, as all the four words share the same root “*check*”. Consequently, word is the common factor underlying a set of forms, a unit of vocabulary, a lexical item, or a lexeme.

6.2.1.3 A grammatical unit

Word is a comparably abstract unit to be set up to show how words work in the grammar of a language. As we know, language presents itself as a hierarchy in different respects. In terms of lexicogrammar, it rises from morpheme at the bottom up to the sentence at the top, and word is a level between morpheme

and word group, as shown in the following hierarchical rank.



A word, in this sense, is then a grammatical unit, of the same theoretical kind as morpheme and sentence. This understanding may be acceptable when speaking of polymorphemic words, such as “*blackbird*”, “*aircraft*”, “*townhall*”, etc. However, there is a loophole in this statement, because it makes one confused when one is talking about monomorphemic words, such as “*black*”, “*bird*”, “*air*”, “*craft*”, “*town*”, “*hall*”. They are free morphemes as well as words.

6.2.2 The identification of words

In addition to the three senses of “word” mentioned in the previous section, which are helpful in defining ‘word’ in spite of their inadequacies to account for all the language data, there are other factors which help us to identify words.

6.2.2.1 Stability

Words are the most stable of all linguistic units, in respect of their internal structure, that is, the constituent parts of a complex word have little potential for rearrangement, compared with the relative positional mobility of the constituents of sentences in the hierarchy. Take the word “*chairman*” for example, if we rearrange the morphemes as **manchair*, we produce an unacceptable word in English. But it is all right for us to rearrange the constituents

In a sentence to a certain degree.

ex. 6—3

The chairman looked at the audience.

The audience looked at the chairman.

6.2.2.2 Relative uninterruptibility

By uninterruptibility, we mean new elements are not to be inserted into a word even when there are several parts in a word. Nothing is to be inserted in between the three parts of the word “*disappointment*”: *dis+appoint+ment*. Nor is one allowed to use pauses between the parts of a word (**dis appoint ment*). In contrast, one could add “*Jane*” in the coordinating subject of the following sentence.

ex. 6—4

Paul, (Jane) and Rebecca are my classmates.

In an extreme case, one could insert the adverb “*even*” between any two parts in the following sentence.

ex. 6—5

(Even) Paul (even) didn’t (even) love (even) Jane (even).

6.2.2.3 A minimum free form

This was first suggested by Leonard Bloomfield. He advocated treating sentence as “the maximum free form” and word “the minimum free form”, the smallest unit which can constitute, by itself, a complete utterance. See the underlined part in the following exchange of utterances.

ex. 6—6

—Is Jane coming this evening?

—Possibly.

Expressions such as “*Hi*”, “*Darling*”, “*Bother*” “*Shit*” and others can function in the same way.

It is interesting to note that there is heated discussion in respect of this statement. The opponents argue that not all word-like units can satisfy this criterion, as the articles “*a*” and “*the*” in English could not stand by themselves. But the advocates cite the following exceptions:

ex. 6—7

—What is missing in a sentence such as ‘Dog is barking’?

—A.

6.2.3 Subclassification of words

6.2.3.1 Variable and invariable words

Words can be classified according to their variability. In VARIABLE WORDS, one could find ordered and regular series of grammatically different word forms; on the other hand, part of the word remains relatively constant. Thus, each ordered series constitutes a paradigm.

ex. 6 8

follow	mat
follows	mats
following	
followed	

Among Indo-European languages, one could find more variable words in Latin and Sanskrit, less in German, and the least in English.

INVARIABLE WORDS refer to those words such as “*since*”, “*when*”, “*seldom*”, “*through*”, “*hello*”. They do not take inflective

endings.

6.2.3.2 Grammatical words and lexical words

In another dimension, words can also be classified into GRAMMATICAL WORDS and LEXICAL WORDS. The former is also termed as FUNCTION WORD, FORM WORD, FUNCTOR in linguistic scholarship. The notion is applied to a word whose role is largely or wholly grammatical. Here is a list for reference.

- (1) The verb *to be* when it merely links (e.g. John is a student);
- (2) The prepositions (e.g. *in, on, over, through*);
- (3) The identifying words, or determiners, such as the articles, possessives, and demonstratives, which relate things to their environments (e.g. *a, an, the; my, her, your, mine; this, that, these, those*);
- (4) The quantifiers (e.g. *many, few, little, several, much, a lot of, a piece of*);
- (5) The coordinating conjunctions (e.g. *and, or, but*);
- (6) The relatives, which attach adjective clauses to their antecedents (e.g. *who, which, that*);
- (7) The adverbial and subordinating conjunctions, which bring clauses into certain logical relationships (time, condition, concession, cause, etc.) with the sentence as a whole (e.g. *because, when, unless, that*);
- (8) The conjunctive adverbs, which relate a following sentence to a preceding one in certain logical ways (e.g. *however, nevertheless*);
- (9) The intensifiers (e.g. *very, absolutely, completely*);
- (10) The auxiliary verbs (e.g. *be, do, have, may, can, will*);

- (11) The pronouns, pro-adverbs, and other pro-words, which stand in for lexical words or phrases (e.g. *he, them, so, there, do*).

By LEXICAL WORD, we mean a word which carries the semantic content. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and many adverbs belong to this class.

Lexical words account for most of the entries by TYPE (the number of different words in a dictionary), whereas grammatical words have about the same percentage of occurrences in a text by TOKEN (the total number of words in a text).

6.2.3.3 Closed-class words and open-class words

The distinction of grammatical words and lexical words leads to the distinction of "closed-class" words and "open-class" words.

A word which belongs to the CLOSED-CLASS is one whose membership is fixed or limited. New members are not regularly added. Therefore pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, articles, etc. are all closed class items.

The OPEN CLASS is one whose membership is in principle indefinite or unlimited. With the emergence of new ideas, inventions, etc., new expressions are continually and constantly being added to the lexicon. Nouns, verbs, adjectives and many adverbs are all open-class items.

As a matter of fact, the distinction between closed-class words and open-class words is not quite as clear-cut as it seems. Preposition, though a closed-class, is a relatively open one in English. Expressions such as "*regarding*", "*throughout*", "*out of*", "*according to*", "*with regard to*", "*in spite of*", "*by means of*",.... are now recognized as prepositions or complex prepositions. In respect

of open-class items, auxiliary verbs, which used to be ranked as open class words, are relatively closed in number.

6.2.3.4 Word class

All the above classifications seem to be general. A more realistic way is to classify words either by analyzing the various grammatical, semantic and phonological properties of the words in a language, or by grouping them into classes on the basis of formal similarities in terms of inflections and distribution. This is close to the notion of "parts of speech" in traditional grammar. Based on this Latinized tradition, eight or nine word classes are established, namely, "noun", "pronoun", "adjective", "verb", "adverb", "preposition", "conjunction", "interjection", and "article".

Today, word classes display a wider range of more precisely defined classes. Here are some of the categories newly introduced in linguistic analysis.

(1) Particles

PARTICLES include at least the infinitive marker "to" (despite its surface similarity to a preposition, it really has nothing in common with that or any other word class), the negative marker "not", and the subordinate units in phrasal verbs, such as "*get by*" (to continue one's way of life) "*do up*" (to fasten), "*look back*" (to remember), etc.

(2) Auxiliaries

AUXILIARIES used to be regarded as verbs. Because of their unique properties, which one could hardly expect of a verb, linguists today tend to define them as a separate word class. Compare the behaviour of the auxiliaries with that of ordinary verbs in the following examples.

ex 6—9

NEGATION	I <u>can't</u> come. *I <u>wantn't</u> come.
INVERSION	Is <u>he</u> coming? * <u>Keeps he</u> coming?
CODE	I'll come and so <u>will</u> Bill. *I intend to come and so <u>intend</u> Bill.
EMPHASIS	He ' <u>has</u> come. *He ' <u>seems</u> to come.

(3) Pro-form

In traditional grammar, pronoun is the only word class which can function as a substitute for another item. To be more exact, it refers to the closed sets of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase or a single noun. In fact, the following items are either wrongly labelled as pronoun or totally neglected:

ex. 6—10

Pro-adjective	<u>Your</u> pen is red.
Pro-verb	He knows English better than he <u>did</u> .
Pro-adverb	He hopes he'll win and I hope <u>so</u> too.
Pro-locative	Jame's hiding <u>there</u> , behind the door.

In order to refer collectively to the items in a sentence which substitute for other items or constructions, it is advisable to regard PRO-FORM as a separate word class.

6.2.4 Lexeme

In order to reduce the ambiguity of the term "word", the term LEXEME is postulated as the abstract unit which refers to the smallest unit in the meaning system of a language that can be distinguished from other smaller units. A lexeme can occur in many

different forms in actual spoken or written texts. For example, “*write*” and “*fat*” are the lexemes of the two sets of words in ex. 6—11 respectively.

ex. 6—11

write	fat
writes	fatter
wrote	fattest
writing	
written	

6.3 Idiom

Not all lexemes are word-lexemes. There are also phrasal lexemes, i.e., lexemes whose forms are phrases. Most phrasal lexemes are IDIOMS; it is especially true for a sequence of words which is semantically and often syntactically restricted.

6.3.1 Two basic requirements

Firstly, the meaning of a semantically restricted idiom is unpredictable. That is to say, meanings cannot be calculated by adding up the separate individual words. This can be fully illustrated by the following examples:

ex. 6—12

How do you do? (an expression used in phatic communion)

He washed his hands of the matter. (He refused to have anything more to do with the matter.)

Secondly, when idioms are used in sentences, one must learn the special syntactic restrictions. Although idiomatic expressions are similar in structure to regular phrases (e.g. “*How do you do*”

versus "*How do you swim*"), one would hardly accept the following expressions:

ex. 6—13

*How did you do?

*How does he do?

But it is all right for one to say:

ex. 6—14

How did you do it?

How does he do that?

In spite of the fact that most idioms are not to be conjugated in accordance with person, number and tense, some idioms do enjoy a certain degree of latitude.

ex. 6—15

(a) He is at hammer and tongs. (He argues violently.)

She went at it hammer and tongs. (She argued violently.)

They go at it hammer and tongs. (They argue violently.)

(b) He cycled hell for leather down the hill. (He cycled very fast down the hill.)

They ran off hell for leather. (They ran off very fast.)

Some idioms can undergo passive transformation. For instance,

ex. 6—16

The CIA kept tabs on the Russian spy.

Tabs were kept on the Russian spy by the CIA.

6.3.2 Factors which account for the formation of idioms

As it has already been shown that idioms are forms of expression approved by usage, it is worth our effort to give an account of the factors which lead to their formation.

6.3.2.1 Preservation of the older forms

Some idioms are inherited from older periods of the language. The older forms become antagonistic to the conventional rules of phonology and syntax, but the long-standing expressions themselves are still in wide circulation.

ex. 6—17

to take to wife (“*to*” retains its older meaning: as. in the capacity,

waifs and strays (in Middle English, ‘*waife*’ or ‘*wafe*’ means ownerless property).

kith and kin (“*kith*” means “*acquaintance*” in Old English)

6.3.2.2 Confusion between two expressions or utterances

Some speakers tend to confuse two utterances, which are correct when they are spoken separately, to produce a totally new sentence. This is regarded as a case of syntactic contamination. However, if such syntactic contamination becomes very common and is subsequently accepted by a whole community, it then develops into an idiom.

ex. 6—18

“ever and anon” + “now and then” → “every now and then”

“rarely” ÷ “hardly ever” → “rarely ever”

6.3.2.3 Omission of words from some expressions

Some idioms result from ellipsis of some phrase or clause, so that their meaning can only be understood by recovering those omitted words.

ex. 6—19

“after all has been said” —→ “after all”

“someone gave him information to lead him to understand” —→ “some gave him to understand”

6.3.2.4 Picturesque metaphors

Many idioms have their beginnings in picturesque metaphors. For instance, the idiom “to be at a loose end” (have nothing to do) was originally said of a horse whose tether had broken or slipped; the idiom “to play to the gallery” was said of an actor who sought to win popular applause, now it is used to mean “to do what will please the ordinary people, even if it is not the most sensible course of action, so as to gain popularity”.

6.3.3 Application of idioms

As idioms of a particular language are hard to generalize about, they always pose a problem to non-native speakers in their comprehension and application. In this sense, it is useful to regard idioms as part of one's receptive **equipment** for listening and reading, because one's receptive knowledge will always surpass one's expressive faculty.

The use of idioms is not encouraged if the learner has little knowledge about the circumstances under which they are to be applied, nor should one attempt it at the expense of intelligibility, which will ultimately do harm to successful communication. It

is recommended that the application of idioms usually comes at the latter stage of one's learning of a foreign language.

6.4 Collocation

COLLOCATION is a term used in lexicology by some linguists to refer to the habitual co-occurrences of individual lexical items. The lexical items thus involved are COLLOCATES.

Features of collocates are described in the following sections.

6.4.1 Mutual expectancy

Language is not merely a medium for one to speak, but for one to speak to others. We can further modify the statement by saying 'we use language to speak to somebody to get them to do something in a certain situation'.

Based on this general understanding, one can expect that words such as "*letter*", "*mail*", "*stamp*", "*parcel*", "*envelop*", "*registered*", will co-occur in a dialogue between a clerk and a client in a post office. And one would never be shocked if he heard terms such as "*lesson*", "*text*", "*exercise*", "*question*", "*answer*", "*quiz*", "*black-board*", "*teacher*", "*student*", in a classroom.

6.4.2 Fixed syntactic-lexical relations

From the syntactic point of view, a lexical item of a particular word class tends to collocate with another lexical item.

ex. 6—20

- (a) pick-and-span
- (b) cure somebody of a disease
- (c) I enjoy talking to you about old times.

In (a), the coordinated attributives are not to be used singly;

in (b), "of" is not to be replaced by other prepositions; in (c), the use of infinitive phrase is rejected.

6.4.3 Inexplicability

Why should one lexeme collocate with another lexeme? There is, very often, no way to account for this. Hence, we do not say it simply because that is not the way we talk.

ex. 6—21

The man badly wanted them to leave.

*The man badly wished them to leave.

If we change the predicate verb 'wanted' in the first sentence to 'wished' in the second sentence, the latter becomes unacceptable to a native speaker. Also, we use expressions such as "*green with envy*", "*green-eyed*", to mean jealousy, but no one would challenge the substitution of "*red*" or "*blue*" for "*green*".

Exercises

1. Define the following terms.

lexicon function word

word lexical word

closed-class pro-form

open-class idiom

word class collocation

2. Observe all the nouns and all the verbs in the sentence below. Without considering meaning, how many formal signals can you find which indicate that they are nouns and verbs?

He took a short cut this time over the ridge and down a gully which was full of ringbarked trees and long white grass.

He has nearly reached its mouth when a great greasy black goanna clambered up a sapling from under his feet and looked fightable.

3. In the following sentences, all the content words are nonsense words. Indicate the word class of each nonsense word as follows:

Ex. The wrinzles are gumbling dompily.
Noun Verb Adverb

- (a) Gumble with wrinzles into the gingat.
(b) The gingat is very clompious.
(c) All sligful nimbas nimble rittily.
(d) My gambat was droozumed by homhoms.
4. Read the following paragraph and list all the function words you can find. (Include all forms of *be* as function words.) Give the percentage of function words in this paragraph.

We saw in Chapter 1 that linguists were called to the aid of language teaching in the Second World War. They belonged to a school of linguistics which is usually described as structural and associated with the name of Leonard Bloomfield, whose book, *Language*, sets out the main ideas of structural linguistics.

5. What test would you apply to show that *Aux* in English belongs to a different form class from *Verb*?
6. "A free form which consists entirely of two or more lesser free forms...is a *phrase*. A free form which is not a phrase is a *word*. A word, then,...is a minimum free form" (Bloomfield, 1935: 178).

Answer the following questions:

- (a) The term 'word' is ambiguous. What kind of words

is Bloomfield's definition intended to cover?

- (b) Are there any traditionally recognized words of English (in the appropriate sense of 'word') that fail to satisfy Bloomfield's definition?
- (c) What other criteria have been involved in the definition of the word?

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7. SYNTAX

Words, word groups and phrases cannot occur at random to form a meaningful utterance. They have to follow certain rules of ordering. SYNTAX is the study of the rules governing the ways words, word groups and phrases are combined to form sentences in a language, or the study of the interrelationships between elements in sentence structures.

7.1 Syntactic relations

Syntactic relations can be analysed into three kinds, namely, positional relations, relations of substitutability and relations of co-occurrence.

7.1.1 Positional relation

POSITIONAL RELATION, or WORD ORDER, refers to the sequential arrangement of words in a language. If the words in a sentence fail to occur in a fixed order required by the convention of a language, one tends to produce an utterance either ungrammatical or nonsensical at all. This can be illustrated by sentences (b) and (c) in ex. 7-1 respectively.

ex. 7—1

- (a) The boy kicked the ball.
- (b) *Boy the ball kicked the
- (c) *The ball kicked the boy.

On other occasions, the two sentences cited in ex. 7—2 have exactly the same words in number and form and are both grammatical.

tically well-formed, but they have opposite meanings.

ex. 7—2

(a) The teacher saw the students.

(b) The students saw the teacher.

Positional relations are a manifestation of one aspect of "syntagmatic relations" observed by F. de Saussure. In some elementary linguistic textbooks, they are also called HORIZONTAL RELATIONS or simply CHAIN RELATIONS.

7.1.2 Relation of substitutability

Firstly, the RELATION OF SUBSTITUTABILITY refers to classes or sets of words substitutable for each other grammatically in the same sentence structures.

ex. 7—3

The _____ smiles.
man
boy
girl

Secondly, it refers to groups of more than one word which may be jointly substitutable grammatically for a single word of a particular set.

ex. 7—4

(a) The { strong man
tallest boy
pretty girl } smiles

(b) He went there { yesterday.
last week.
the day before.
after he finished the exam.

In (a) one can make a choice from the nominal groups, whereas in (b) one can make a choice from the adverbial groups. This is what Saussure called "associative relations", or in Ejemslev's term, **PARADIGMATIC RELATIONS**. To make it more understandable, they are called **VERTICAL RELATIONS** or **CHOICE RELATIONS**.

7.1.3 Relation of co-occurrence

By the relation of **CO-OCCURRENCE** one means that words of different sets of clauses may permit, or require, the occurrence of a word of another set or class to form a sentence or a particular part of a sentence. For instance, a nominal phrase can be preceded by a determiner and adjective(s) and followed by a verbal phrase.

ex. 7—5

(preceded by)	NP	(followed by)
A pretty	girl	smiles
The tallest	boy	sings
The African	man	cries
.....		breathes
		

Thus relations of co-occurrence partly belong to syntagmatic relations, partly to paradigmatic relations.

7.2 Construction and constituent

7.2.1 Construction

CONSTRUCTION or **CONSTRUCT** can be understood in different ways. When it is approached in its most general sense, it refers to the overall process of internal organisation of a gram-

matical unit—how a phrase, a clause or a sentence is constructed out of a set of morphemes by following a set of rules.

Construction can further refer to the syntagmatic result of such a process. A particular pattern of construction is manifested as a sequence of units which plays a functional role in grammar.

ex. 7—6

Subject+verb+object (clausal type)

Determiner+noun (phrasal type)

In the analysis of a text, construction refers to a token of a constructional type. The sentence "*The girl is giggling*" is recognised as "Subject + Predicate" type, but it is realized in a string "*The + girl + is + giggling*." It is construction in this sense that can be analysed into constituents.

7.2.2 Immediate constituents

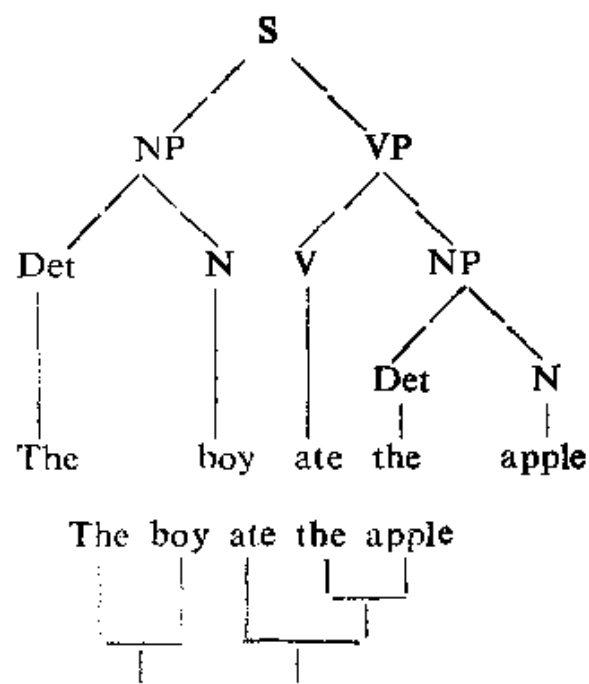
Since construction is composed of several parts, which can be single words, or groups of words, contiguous or discontiguous, the small units are known as its IMMEDIATE CONSTITUENTS.

The small units themselves can be constructions of specific types. In the sentence "*The girl is giggling*" the nominal phrase "*The girl*" can be further analysed into "*The* (Determiner)+*girl* (Noun)". Thus, "*The girl*" is construction of a nominal phrase, whereas "*The*" and "*girl*" are its constituents.

IMMEDIATE CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS or IC ANALYSIS can be represented in different ways. Take the construction "*The boy ate the apple*" for example, one can analyze it by means of TREE DIAGRAMS or BRACKETING.

ex. 7—7

(a) Tree diagrams



(b) Bracketing

(((The) (boy)) ((ate) ((the) (apple)))))

7.2.3 Endocentric and exocentric constructions

The syntactic constructions analysed are of two main types: endocentric and exocentric constructions, depending on their distribution and the relation between their constituents.

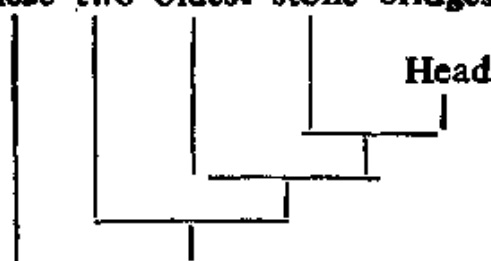
7.2.3.1 Endocentric

ENDOCENTRIC CONSTRUCTION is one whose distribution is functionally equivalent to that of one or more of its constituents, i.e., a word or a group of words, which serves as a definable **CENTRE** or **HEAD**.

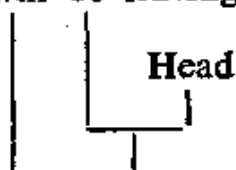
Usually noun phrases, verb phrases and adjective phrases belong to endocentric types because the constituent items are subordinate to the Head.

ex. 7—8

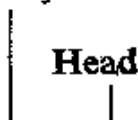
(a) these two oldest stone bridges



(b) will be leaving



(c) very late



7.2.3.2 Exocentric

EXOCENTRIC CONSTRUCTION is just the opposite of endocentric construction. It refers to a group of syntactically related words where none of the words is functionally equivalent to the group as a whole, that is, there is no definable "Centre" or "Head" inside the group. Exocentric construction usually includes basic sentence, prepositional phrase, predicate (verb+object) construction, and connective (be+complement) construction.

ex. 7—9

- (a) The boy smiled. (Neither constituent can substitute for the sentence structure as a whole.)
- (b) He hid behind the door. (Neither constituent can function as an adverbial.)
- (c) He kicked the ball. (Neither constituent stands for the verb-object sequence.)
- (d) John seemed angry. (After division, the connective

construction no longer exists.)

7.2.4 Coordinate and subordinate constructions

Endocentric constructions fall into two main types, depending on the relation between constituents: coordinate construction and subordinate construction.

7.2.4.1 Coordinate construction

COORDINATE CONSTRUCTION refers to two or more words or phrases or clauses having equivalent syntactic status. Each of the separate constituents can stand for the original construction functionally.

ex. 7—8

- (a) boys and girls
- (b) coffee or tea
- (c) They sang and danced
- (d) The Old Man and the Sea
- (e) John loves Mary and Mary loves John too.

7.2.4.2 Subordinate construction

SUBORDINATION refers to the process or result of linking linguistic units so that they have different syntactic status, one being dependent upon the other, and usually a constituent of the other. Thus the subordinate constituents are words which modify the Head, as shown in the underlined parts of the construction. Consequently, they can be called MODIFIERS.

ex. 7—9

- (a) two dogs
 Head

(b) (My brother) can drink (wine).

Head

(c) Swimming in the lake (is fun).

Head

(d) (The pepper was) hot beyond endurance.

Head

7.3 Syntactic function

The syntactic function shows the relationship between a linguistic form and other parts of the linguistic pattern in which it is used.

Names of functions are expressed in terms of subjects, objects, predicates, modifiers, complements, etc. Apart from the notion of "modifiers" being already given in the previous section, the following are some of the basic functional terms in syntax.

7.3.1 Subject

In some languages, "SUBJECT" refers to one of the nouns in the nominative case. The typical example can be found in Latin, where subject is always in nominative case, such as "*pater*" and "*filius*" in the following examples.

ex. 7-10

(a) pater filium amat (the father loves the son)

(b) patrem filius amat (the son loves the father)

In English, a GRAMMATICAL SUBJECT refers to a noun which can establish correspondence with the verb and which can be checked by a tag-question test.

ex. 7-11

(a) He is a mathematician. (Isn't he?)

- (b) John has never been to Tibet. (Has he?)

The notion "subject" is also approached in a complex way either semantically (logically) or psychologically.

ex. 7—12

The boy kicked the dog.

From the semantic point of view, "*the boy*" is the doer of the action, and is accepted as the "subject" of the sentence, but this interpretation fails to account for the following examples, where "*the boy*", though the agent, is the complement of the preposition "by" and "*The books*" is by no means a doer.

ex. 7—13

- (a) The dog was kicked by the boy.

- (b) The books sold well.

Psychologically, people tend to regard the first major constituent of a sentence as the "subject". If it is not the subject matter of a sentence, it at least identifies the relative importance of the subject-matter, such as "*The moon*", "*Red*", "*His behaviour*", "*Yesterday*" in the following sentences.

ex. 7—14

- (a) The moon is rising.

- (b) Red is the east.

- (c) His behaviour I can't stand.

- (d) Yesterday I went to the zoo.

Of course, confusion is avoided if all the three criteria apply to the same structure. In the example "*The woman is having her breakfast*," "*The woman*" has a N-V correspondence with "*is having*", is the doer of the action, and occupies the initial position of the sentence. Linguists today use different function labels to suit different needs, e.g. "Agent", "Patient", "Beneficiary", "Instru-

ment", and others for logical roles in semantic analysis, and "Theme" for psychological subjects of the thematic structure.

The above distinction can be seen in the following examples.

ex. 7—15

- (a) Mother has given my brother this toy. (Hasn't she?)

Gr.

Log.

Psy.

- (b) My brother has been given this toy by Mother.

Gr. —Subj.

Log. —Agent

Psy. —Theme

(Hasn't he?)

- (c) This toy my brother has been given by

Psy. — Gr. —Subj.

Theme

Mother. (Hasn't/he?)

Log. —Agent

7.3.2 Predicate

PREDICATE refers to a major constituent of sentence structure in a binary analysis in which all obligatory constituents other than the subject were considered together.

ex. 7—16

- (a) The boy is running.

- (b) Peter broke the glass.

- (c) Jane must be mad!

As predicate includes constituents such as verb, object, complement, etc., people find it illogical to use a class-term, namely, the verb, in grammatical analysis of a functional nature. The word PRE-

DICATOR is suggested for verb or verbs included in a predicate.

7.3.3 Object

Object is also a term hard to define. Traditionally, OBJECT refers to the "receiver" or "goal" of an action, and it is further classified into DIRECT OBJECT and INDIRECT OBJECT.

ex. 7-17

(a) Mother bought a doll.

(b) Mother gave my sister a doll.

Ind. Obj. Dir. Obj.

In some inflecting languages, object is marked by case labels: the accusative case for direct object, and the dative case for indirect object.

In English, "object" is recognised by tracing its relation to word order (after the verb and preposition) and by inflections (of pronouns).

ex. 7-18

(a) Mother gave a doll to my sister.

(b) John kicked me.

Modern linguists (e.g. Chomsky, Halliday) suggest that object refers to such an item that it can become subject in a passive transformation.

ex. 7-19

(a) John broke the glass. (The glass was broken by John.)

(b) Peter saw Jane. (Jane was seen by Peter.)

Although there are nominal phrases in ex. 7-20, they are by no means object because they cannot be transformed into passive voice.

ex. 7-20

- (a) He died last week.
- (b) The match lasted three hours.
- (c) He changed trains at Fengtai. (*Trains were changed by him at Fengtai.)

7.3.4 The relation between classes and functions

Classes and functions determine each other, but not in any one-to-one relation.

A class item can perform several functions. For instance, a noun or a nominal phrase can function as the subject, object, modifier, adverbial and complement of a sentence.

ex. 7-21

- (a) The boys are playing football. (Subj. and Obj.)
- (b) He the Summer Palace (Modifier)
- (c) He came here last month. (Adv.)
- (d) He changed trains at Fengtai. (Comp.)

Similarly, a function can be fulfilled by several classes. For instance, the subject of a sentence can be realized by a noun, pronoun, numeral infinitive, etc.

ex. 7-22

- (a) The dog is barking. (Nominal)
- (b) We will stay here. (Pronoun)
- (c) Only two-thirds of the population here are workers. (Numeral)
- (d) To run fast can be dangerous. (Verbal)

7.4 Category

The term CATEGORY in some approaches refers to classes

and functions in its narrow sense, e.g., noun, verb, subject, predicate, noun phrase, verb phrase, etc. More specifically, it refers to the defining properties of these general units: the categories of the noun, for example, include number, gender, case and countability; and of the verb, for example, tense, aspect, voice, etc. In this section, we are talking about the grammatical categories in the second sense.

7.4.1 Number

NUMBER is a grammatical category used for the analysis of word classes displaying such contrasts as singular, dual, plural, etc. In English, number is mainly observed in nouns, and there are only two forms: singular and plural, such as “*dog: dogs*”. Number is also reflected in the inflections of pronouns and verbs, such as “*He laughs: They laugh*”, “*this man: these men*”.

In other languages, for example, French, the manifestation of number can be found in adjectives and articles.

ex. 7—23

le cheval royal (the royal horse)

les chevaux royaux (the royal horses)

7.4.2 Gender

GENDER displays such contrasts as “masculine: feminine: neuter”, “animate: inanimate”, etc. for the analysis of word classes. When word items refer to the sex of real-world entities, we are talking about natural gender. The opposite is grammatical gender.

English gender contrast can only be observed in pronouns and a small number of nouns, and they are mainly of the natural gender type.

ex. 7—24

he: she: it

prince: princess

author: authoress

Again, in French, gender is manifested also both in adjectives and articles.

ex. 7—25

beau cadeau (fine art)

belle maison (fine house)

le cadeau est beau.

La maison est belle.

One has always to keep an eye on gender in some languages because it changes lexical meaning sometimes, for example, in French:

ex. 7—26

(a) le poêle (the stove)

la poêle (the frying pan)

(b) le pendule (the pendulum)

la pendule (the clock)

7.4.3 Case

The CASE category is used in the analysis of word classes to identify the syntactic relationship between words in a sentence.

In Latin grammar, cases are based on variations in the morphological forms of the word, and are given the terms “accusative”, “nominative”, “dative”, etc. There are five cases in ancient Greek and eight in Sanskrit. Finnish has as many as fifteen formally distinct cases in nouns, each with its own syntactic function.

In English, the case category is realised in three channels: (a)

Inflection, (b) following a preposition (c) word order, as manifested in ex. 7—27.

ex. 7—27

(a) teacher: teacher's

(b) with/to a man

(c) John kicked Peter; Peter kicked John.

7.4.4 Concord

CONCORD may be defined as the requirement that the forms of two or more words of specific word classes that stand in specific syntactic relationship with one another shall also be characterized by the same paradigmatically marked category (or categories).

In English, there is concord of number between nouns and verbs.

ex. 7—28

man runs men run

bird flies birds fly

Concord of gender and number can be shown in noun-adjective relation in French.

7.4.5 Government

Unlike concord, where there is mutually influenced relation, GOVERNMENT requires that one word of a particular class in a given syntactic construction with another word of a particular syntactic class shall exhibit the form of a specific category.

In English, government applies only to pronouns among the variable words, that is, prepositions and verbs govern particular forms of the paradigms of pronouns according to their syntactic relation with them.

ex. 7—29

to me; to us

I helped him; he helped me.

7.5 Phrase, clause and sentence

7.5.1 Phrase

PHRASE is a single element of structure containing more than one word, and lacking the subject-predicate structure typical of clauses. Traditionally, it is seen as part of a structural hierarchy, falling between clause and word.

ex. 7—30

the three tallest girls (Nominal phrase)

has been doing (verbal phrase)

extremely difficult (adjectiveal phrase)

to the door (prepositional phrase)

very fast (adverbial phrase)

However, there is a tendency to make a distinction between "word group" and "phrase". A word group is an extension of word of a particular class by way of modification with its main features of the class unchanged. Thus we have nominal group, verbal group, adverbial group, conjunction group and preposition group (e.g. right behind, all along). "*To the door*" in ex. 7—30 is still accepted as a prepositional phrase which consists of a preposition plus a nominal group, and is, consequently, no longer a preposition.

7.5.2 Clause

A group of words with its own subject and predicate, if it is included in a larger sentence, is a **CLAUSE**.

Clause can also be classified into FINITE and NON-FINITE clauses, the latter including the traditional infinitive phrase, participial phrase, and gerundial phrase.

ex. 7—31

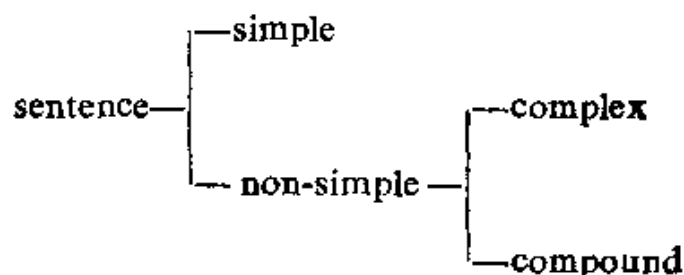
- (a) The best thing would be to leave early.
- (b) It's great for a man to be free.
- (c) Having finished their task, they came to help us.
- (d) Xiao Li being away, Xiao Wang had to do the work.
- (e) Filled with shame, he left the house.
- (f) All our savings gone, we started looking for jobs.
- (g) It's no use crying over spilt milk.
- (h) Do you mind my opening the window?

7.5.3 Sentence

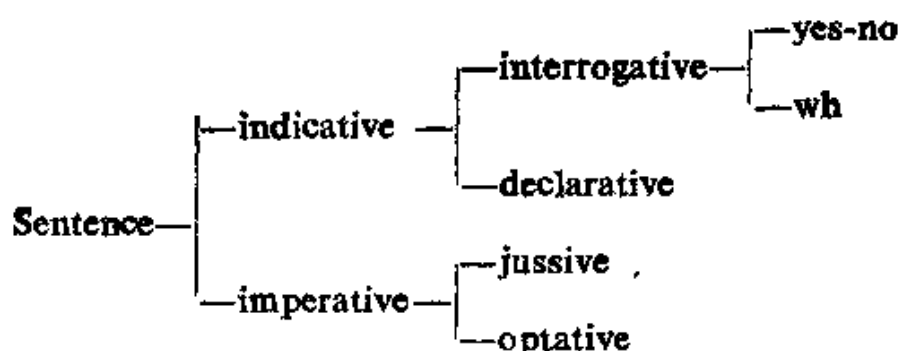
Traditionally, SENTENCE is the minimum part of language that expresses a complete thought. Bloomfield defined the sentence as one 'not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form'.

Sentences may be classified along the intersecting dimensions of structure and function. Here are some of the approaches.

The traditional approach presents a binary division in terms of structure as follows:



The functional approach gives a framework like this:



Some linguists are now interested in the communicative function of utterances and label various sentences as "statement", "question", "command", "request", "confirmation", etc.

Based on word classes, Bolinger (1969) reports five basic sentence types.

ex. 7—32

- (a) Mother fell. (Nominal+intransitive verbal)
- (b) Mother is young. (Nominal+copula+complement)
- (c) Mother loves Dad. (Nominal+transitive verbal+nominal)
- (d) Mother fed Dad breakfast. (Nominal+transitive verbal+nominal+nominal)
- (e) There is time. (There+existential+nominal)

Quirk, et al (1972) introduces seven sentence types according to the grammatical functions of the constituents involved in a sentence.

ex. 7—33

- (a) Type SVC Mary is kind
 a nurse
- (b) Type SVA Mary is here
 in the house.
- (c) Type SV The child was laughing.

true for nominal clauses and adverbial clauses. This is what we call RECURSIVENESS.

ex. 7—36

I met a man who had a son whose wife sold cookies that she had baked in her kitchen that was fully equipped with electrical appliances that were new.

7.6.4 Hypotactic and paratactic

In extending a sentence, whether it is conjoining or embedding, the two constructions can be linked hypotactically or paratactically.

HYPOTACTIC RELATION refers to a construction where constituents have been linked through the use of conjunction.

ex. 7—37

- (a) He bought eggs and milk.
- (b) The man laughed when the dog barked.
- (c) He dictated the letter and she wrote it.

PARATACTIC RELATION refers to constructions which are linked through juxtaposition and punctuation/intonation, and not through the use of conjunctions.

ex. 7—38

- (a) He bought tea, coffee, eggs and milk.
- (b) I think it is so.

7.7 Syntax beyond the sentence

The development of modern linguistic science has helped push the study of syntax beyond the traditional sentence boundary. More linguists are now exploring the syntactic relation between sentences in a paragraph or chapter or the whole text, which leads to the

emergence of TEXT LINGUISTICS and DISCOURSE ANALYSIS.

7.7.1 Sentential connection

The notions of hypotactic and paratactic relations can also be applied to the study of syntactic relations between sentences.

ex. 7—39

— Hypotactic:

- (a) You can phone the doctor if you like. However, I very much doubt whether he is in.
- (b) We live near the sea. So we enjoy a healthy climate.

— Paratactic:

- (a) In Guangzhou it is hot and humid during the summer.
In Beijing it is hot and dry.
- (b) He dictated the letter. She wrote it.
- (c) The door was open. He walked in.

7.7.2 Cohesion

In addition to sentential connection, discoursal/textual cohesiveness can be realized by employing various cohesive devices.

ex. 7—40

- (a) He couldn't open the door. It was locked tight.
(Reference)
- (b) 'Why don't you use your own recorder?' 'I don't have one.' (Substitution)
- (c) 'Did she get there at six?'
'No, (she got there) earlier (than six). (Ellipsis)
- (d) I wanted to help him. Unfortunately it was too late. (Logical connection)

(e) 'Shall we invite Zhang Hui?'

'No. I can't stand the man.' (Lexical collocation)

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

syntax	co-occurrence
construction	endocentric
constituent	exocentric
subordinate	category
coordinate	concord
government	embedding
recursiveness	hypotactic
cohesion	paratactic

2. Cut the following into immediate constituents by putting a slash (/) where the cut should be made in each sentence. Ignore the elements in brackets where they occur.

ex. I rode back/when it was dark.

- (a) The boy was crying.
 - (b) The pretty little girl in a clean white dress has been talking since she came into the room.
 - (c) Shut the door.
 - (d) Open the door quickly.
 - (e) The happy teacher in that class (was beaming away).
 - (f) (I spoke to) the kindly old lady in the choir who was praying for me.
 - (g) (He) bought an old car with his first pay cheque.
3. For each of the underlined constructions or word groups, do the following:

(a) State whether it is headed or non-headed.

(b) If headed, state its headword.

(c) Name the type of constructions.

ex. His son will be keenly competing.

Answer: headed, headword—competing; verbal group

(a) Ducks quack.

(b) The ladder in the shed is long enough.

(c) I saw a bridge damaged beyond repair.

(d) Singing hymns is forbidden in some countries.

(e) His handsome face appeared in the magazine.

(f) A lady of great beauty came out.

(g) He enjoys climbing high mountains.

(h) The man nodded patiently.

(i) A man roused by the insult drew his sword.

4. In the pairs of sentences that follow, indicate with **N** those that need not follow a particular order when they are joined by **and**. Indicate with **O** those that need to be ordered. Aside from the examples below, in your opinion, which type is more relevant.

_____ (a) The sun is shining.

_____ The wind is blowing.

_____ (b) Susie went to sleep.

_____ She had a dream.

_____ (c) John came in.

_____ He closed the door.

_____ (d) He came in.

_____ John closed the door.

_____ (e) She felt embarrassed.

_____ She blushed.

- _____ (f) The sky is blue.
The grass is green.
- _____ (g) He walked away.
He got up.
- _____ (h) He enjoyed the meal.
He loved the pickles.

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8. SEMANTICS

8.1 What is semantics?

SEMANTICS is a technical term used to refer to the study of the communication of meaning through language. It is central to the study of communication; and as communication becomes more and more a crucial factor in social organization, the need to understand it becomes more and more pressing.

Philosophy, psychology and linguistics all claim a deep interest in semantics. The philosophers are interested in understanding the relations between linguistic expressions and the phenomena in the world to which they refer and evaluating the condition of truth and falsehood of such expressions. The psychologists claim a deep interest in understanding the human mind through language. In this chapter we place semantics within the domain of linguistics.

As noted earlier (See 2.3.5), there are at least three levels in a linguistic model: phonology, syntax and semantics. While syntax and phonology study the structure of expressive possibilities in language, semantics studies the meaning that can be expressed.

8.2 What is meaning?

Since semantics takes the study of meaning as its main objective, one must first clarify what meaning is. And it is this very word that baffles us very much with various interpretations. Here are some of these interpretations.

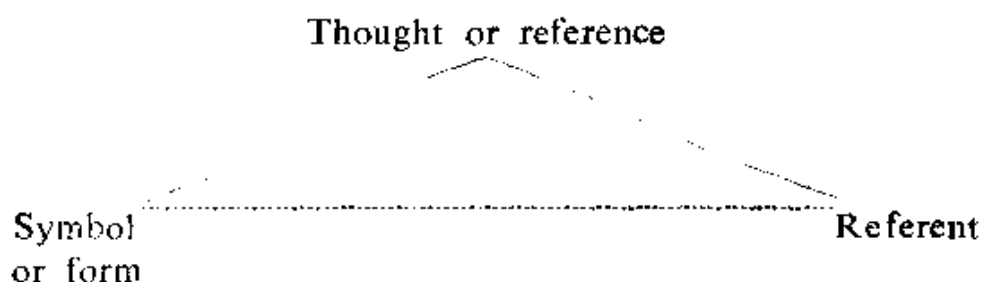
8.2.1 The realist vs the nominalist

The realists hold the view that all things called by the same name have some common property, that is, there is some kind of reality or set of empirical features that establishes whether a given thing will be called a river or a chair. Contrary to this, the nominalists argue that rivers or chairs in the real world have nothing in common other than the name that by convention we have learned to apply to them.

8.2.2 Conceptualism or mentalism

Following F. de Saussure's "sign" theory (1966), the linguistic sign is said to consist of a SIGNIFIER and SIGNIFIED, i.e., a sound image and a concept, linked by a psychological "associative" bond.

Inspired by the medieval grammarians, Ogden and Richards (1923) present the classic "semantic triangle", as manifested in the following diagram, in which, the SYMBOL or FORM refers to the linguistic elements (word, sentence, etc.), the REFERENT refers to the object in the world of experience, and THOUGHT or REFERENCE refers to concept. Thus, the symbol of a word signified "things" by virtue of the "concept" associated with the form of the word in the minds of the speaker of the language; and the CONCEPT looked at from this point of view is the meaning of the word.



8.2.3 Mechanism

Some linguists, Bloomfield (1933), for example, turned to science to counter-act the previous theories and this leads to what is called the mechanistic approach. Since one can define the names of minerals in terms of chemistry and mineralogy, one can define the English word "*salt*" by way of the expression "*sodium chloride*" or the symbol "*NaCl*". So the nature of this theory has nothing to do with the scientific study of mental phenomena. It is restricted to the scientific definition of everything to which language may contribute.

8.2.4 Contextualism

Contextualism is based on the presumption that one can derive meaning from or reduce it to observable context. Two kinds of context are recognized; the situational context and the linguistic context.

Every utterance occurs in a particular spatiotemporal situation, so the following factors are related to the situational context:

- the speaker and hearer
- the actions they are performing at the time
- various external objects and events
- 'deictic' features.

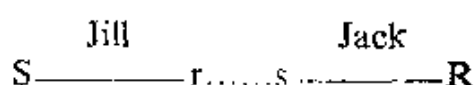
The linguistic context is another aspect of contextualism. It is concerned only with the probability of one word's co-occurrence or collocation with another, which forms part of the "meaning", and an important factor in communication.

Firth's model of context of situation (1957) covers both the situational context and the linguistic context of a text. As a result, it is more comprehensive in nature. See the following model.

- A. The relevant features of the participants: persons, personalities.
 - (a) The verbal action of the participants.
 - (b) The non-verbal action of the participants.
- B. The relevant objects.
- C. The effects of the verbal action.

8.2.5 Behaviourism

Behaviourists attempt to define the meaning of a language form as "the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response it calls forth in the hearer." (Bloomfield, 1933) This theory is somewhat close to contextualism but linked with the psychological interest. The latter is better illustrated by Bloomfield's stimulus-reaction model as follows:



When Jill sees an apple and if she wants to have it she would have first received a stimulus (S) and produced a verbal reaction(r) to Jack. The sound waves resulting from her speech create a verbal stimulus (s) for Jack, which results in his non-verbal reaction(R) of getting the apple.

8.2.6 Functionalism

Functionalists as represented by the Prague School linguists and neo-Firthian linguists, approach the problem from an entirely new orientation. They argue that meaning could only be interpreted from its use or function in social life. Following this principle, semantics is concerned with accounting for the degree of uniformity in the "use" of language which makes normal communication possible.

8.3 Kinds of Meaning

With so many theories and approaches mentioned in the previous section, we should draw at least a tentative hypothesis: meaning is variable and is realized at different levels of language. Even so, the classification of meaning varies with the interest of a particular linguist and the aim he wants to achieve.

8.3.1 The traditional approach

Fries (1952) presents a traditional distinction between "lexical" and "structural" meaning. The former is expressed by those "meaningful" parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, and is given in the dictionary associated with the grammar. The latter expresses the distinction between the subject and the object of a sentence, oppositions of definiteness, tense and number, and the difference between statements, questions and requests. In a word, "The total linguistic meaning of any utterance consists of the lexical meanings of the separate words plus such structural meanings...."

8.3.2 The functional approach

Following a functional approach, Leech (1981) categorizes seven kinds of meaning, five of which are brought under the associative meaning, as in the following model:

Conceptual meaning (1)	Logical, cognitive, or denotative content
------------------------	---

Associative meaning

Connotative meaning (2)	What is communicated by virtue of what language refers to.
-------------------------	--

Social meaning (3)	What is communicated of the social circumstances of language use.
Affective meaning (4)	What is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer.
Reflected meaning (5)	What is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression.
Collocative meaning (6)	What is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment of another word.
Thematic meaning (7)	What is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis.

8.3.3 The pragmatic approach

Both Palmer (1976) and Lyons (1977) have suggested that we should draw a distinction between sentence meaning and utterance meaning, the sentence meaning being **directly predictable** from the grammatical and lexical features of the sentence, while utterance meaning includes all the various types of meaning that are not directly related to them. Thus we are moving into the area of pragmatics with Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) as the forerunners. A relatively detailed discussion of this can be found in chapter 15.

8.4 Sense relationships

While REFERENCE deals with the relationship between the

linguistic elements, words, sentences, etc., and the non-linguistic world of experience, SENSE relates to the complex system of relationships that hold between the linguistic elements themselves (mostly the words); it is concerned only with intra-linguistic relations. This could be more clearly illustrated by the fact that two items have the same reference, but differ in sense (e.g. "*the morning star*" vs "*the evening star*") and items may be synonymous, even if they have no reference (e.g. "*pretty*" vs "*handsome*").

8.4.1 Synonymy

SYNONYMY is used to mean sameness or close similarity of meaning. Dictionary makers rely to a great extent on the existence of synonymy for their definitions.

Some semanticists maintain that there are no real synonyms, that is, no two words have exactly the same meaning. They tend to cite the following reasons. First, some sets of synonyms belong to different dialects of the language. Secondly, words can be used in different styles or registers. Thirdly, some words may be said to differ only in their emotive or evaluative meanings. Fourthly, some words are collocationally restricted. Fifthly, psycholinguists argue that strict synonyms would be difficult to remember. As a result of this, there is only a loose sense of synonymy, based on the fact that many words are close in meaning. This is the kind of synonymy that is exploited by the dictionary maker.

However, true synonymy, though rare, does exist in many languages.

ex. 8—1	Russian	ЯЗЫКОЗНАНИЕ ЛИНГВИСТИКА	
	Chinese	激素	荷尔蒙
		激光	莱塞

English	autumn	fall
	sidewalk	pavement

8.4.2 Antonymy

The term **ANTONYMY** is used for oppositeness of meaning: words that are opposite in meaning are antonyms. Antonymy is a regular and very natural feature of language and can be defined fairly precisely, because there are different kinds of oppositeness which should be clearly distinguished. For instance, some are binarily taxonomic, like "*true/false*", "*dead/alive*", and some are gradable, like "*old/young*", "*big/small*". So we must be careful not to allow the term "antonymy" to distract us into thinking that words contrast only on a single dimension: in fact they may contrast with other words on a number of dimensions at once.

8.4.2.1 Complementarity

COMPLEMENTARITY may be regarded as a special case of incompatibility holding over two-term sets. It is characteristic of such pairs of lexical items that the denial of the one implies the assertion of the other and the assertion of one implies the denial of the other. In ex. 8—2, if one is **not** "*single*", then he/she is "*married*"; if one is "*single*", then he/she is **not** "*married*". The same is true for "*male*" and "*female*", "*alive*" and "*dead*".

ex. 8—2	single	married
	male	female
	alive	dead

8.4.2.2 Gradability

GRADABILITY refers to the feature of those antonyms which

are gradable (that is, in terms of "more" or "less"), because there are often intermediate forms between the pairs.

ex. 8—3	hot	cold
	old	young
	big	small

In the "hot/cold" pair in ex. 8—3, one can find intermediate terms such as "hot/warm/cool/cold". And it is possible for one to be neither "old" nor "young", neither "big" nor "small". This shows that the denial of the one does not imply assertion of the other, since "*our room is not big*" does not always, though it may imply "*our room is small.*"

8.4.2.3 Relational opposites

A quite different kind of "oppositeness" is found with pairs of words which exhibit the reversal of a relationship between items, and is called RELATIONAL OPPOSITES.

ex. 8—4	buy	sell
	husband	wife
	lend	borrow
	own	belong to
	teacher	pupil
	above	below

Terms such as "above" and "below", involved in relational opposition may be TRANSITIVE, that is, if X is above Y and Y above Z, then X is above Z.

Some expressions are SYMMETRIC. Expressions of a symmetric relationship are exemplified as follows.

ex. 8—5	married to (<i>John is married to Mary = Mary is married to John</i>);	cousin (<i>Peter is Jane's cousin</i>)
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=*Jane is Peter's cousin*); beside (*Jack stands beside Rebecca*=*Rebecca stands beside Jack*);

meet (*Robert met Linda*=*Linda met Robert*).

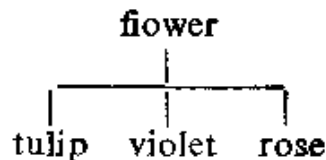
The relational oppositeness can also be REFLEXIVE if it relates an argument to itself as in the following example.

ex. 8—6 Four equals four.

8.4.3 Hyponymy

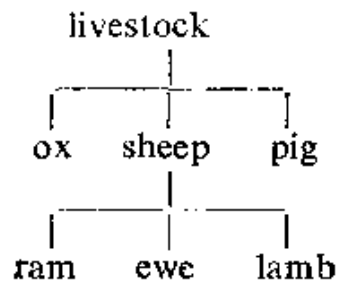
HYPONYMY involves us in the notion of meaning inclusion. This is a matter of class membership. To put it more simply, when X is a kind of Y, the lower term X (which is more specific) is the HYPONYM, and the upper term Y (which is more general) is the SUPERORDINATE. Two hyponyms having the same superordinate are called CO-HYPONYMS. Ex. 8—7 shows that “tulip”, “violet”, and “rose” are co-hyponyms, and “flower” is the superordinate.

ex. 8—7



All hyponymy is transitive in the sense that there is a hierarchical relation between different terms. If a relation holds between the superordinate X and the hyponym Y, and Y in turn is the superordinate of Z, then X is also the superordinate of Z. See ex. 8—8.

ex. 8—8



8.4.4 Polysemy and homonymy

Not only do different words have different meanings, but the same word may have a set of different meanings. The latter case is polysemy; and the word in question is polysemic. For instance, the word "negative" can be used as a noun with one of the following meanings:

- (a) a statement saying or meaning "no"; a refusal or denial.
- (b) one of the words and expressions "no", "not", "nothing", "never", "not at all", etc.
- (c) a negative photograph or film.

A very practical problem is that if one form has several meanings, it is not always clear whether we shall say that this is an example of polysemy or of homonymy. The conventional answer to this is that we recognize a case of polysemy if the senses concerned are related historically, as manifested by the pairs in the following example:

ex. 8—9	pupil (student)	pupil (of the eye)
	sole (of a shoe)	sole (the fish)
	metal	mettle
	flour	flower

A second way is to see if the differences in meaning are regular and to some degree predictable. If so, we have polysemy rather than homonymy. For instance, the word "ear" can mean either "the head of a grain-producing plant" or "the organ of hearing". Although the same form "ear" derived from different origins, it is still regarded as polysemous. A third way of attempting to establish polysemy rather than homonymy is to look for a central meaning or a core of meaning. "Sad" and "score" are polysemous, because they shared a central meaning: a harboured grievance.

8.4.5 Sense relations between sentences

Sections 8.4.1—8.4.4 deal with sense relationships between words. As a matter of fact, sense relationships also exist between sentences.

8.4.5.1 Entailment

ENTAILMENT can be illustrated by the following two sentences with sentence (a) entailing sentence (b).

- ex. 8—10 (a) He married a blonde heiress.
(b) He married a blonde.

In terms of truth value, the following relationships exist between these two sentences: When (a) is true, (b) is necessarily true. When (b) is false, (a) is false. When (a) is false, (b) may be true or false. When (b) is true, (a) may be true or false.

Entailment is basically a semantic relation (or logical implication), but we have to assume co-reference of "*John*" or a person by other name between the "*he*" in (a) and the "*he*" in (b) before we can say that (a) entails (b).

8.4.5.2 Presupposition

In the following pair of sentences, Sentence (a) presupposes Sentence (b).

- ex. 8—11
(a) The girl he married was an heiress.
(b) He married a girl.

We can see that PRESUPPOSITION is similar to entailment in that when (a) is true, (b) is true in both cases. However, there is an important difference between them, that is, presupposition, unlike entailment, is not vulnerable to negation. That is to say,

when (a) is false, (b) is still true. Other statements about the truth value in presupposition are: When (b) is true, (a) can either be true or false. When (b) is false, no truth value can be said about (a).

Presupposition does not have to be between two propositions. An example in point is the famous "*when did you stop beating your wife?*", which presupposes he has been beating his wife.

Presupposition is not just a matter of logic, because a question, a command, and an exclamation can all presuppose a proposition, such as in:

ex. 8—12

Is the book you borrowed from the library valuable?

Return the book you borrowed from the library.

What an interesting book you borrowed from the library!

8.4.5.3 Implicature

We use the term IMPLICATURE to refer to the relation between the following two sentences:

ex. 8—13

(a) Few men marry blonde heiresses.

(b) Some men marry blonde heiresses.

It is also a relation of implication because we can say that from Sentence (a) we can conclude Sentence (b). However, this is generally understood to be a relation of pragmatic implication, defined in terms of the speaker's and the hearer's assumptions and beliefs. (See Chapter 15)

8.4.5.4 Other relationships

There are other sense relationships between sentences or be-

tween constituents within a sentence.

- (1) X is synonymous with Y, that is, if X is true, Y is true; also if X is false, Y is false; and vice versa. This can be illustrated by the two sentences in ex. 8—14.

ex. 8—14

- (a) The boy killed the dog.
(b) The dog was killed by the boy.

- (2) X is inconsistent with Y, that is, if X is true, Y is false; also, if Y is true, X is false. In ex. 8—15, the two sentences are inconsistent in their sense relationship.

ex. 8—15

- (a) John is married to Mary.
(b) John is a bachelor.

- (3) X is a contradiction, therefore X is invariably false. Ex. 8—16 is a case in point.

ex. 8—16

*My unmarried sister is married to a bachelor.

- (4) X is semantically anomalous. Here, X is absurd in the sense that it presupposes a contradiction. In ex. 8—17, the abstract notion "*intentions*" cannot be harboured by the inanimate subject "*typewriter*".

ex. 8—17

*His typewriter has had bad intentions.

Finally, we may also include translation equivalence and ambiguity, which is a one-many relation between sentence and sense.

8.5 Semantic analysis

8.5.1 Componential analysis

Componential analysis defines the meaning of a lexical element in terms of SEMANTIC COMPONENTS. Here are some examples:

ex. 8—18

- (a) man: HUMAN ADULT MALE
- (b) woman: HUMAN ADULT -MALE
- (c) bachelor: HUMAN ADULT MALE-MARRIED
- (d) mare: EQUINE ADULT FEMALE

Semantic components can also be connected by LOGICAL CONSTANTS; such as:

ex. 8—19

- (a) boy: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and not ADULT
- (b) girl: ANIMATE and HUMAN and FEMALE and not ADULT
- (c) man: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and ADULT
- (d) woman: ANIMATE and HUMAN and FEMALE and ADULT

Componential analysis might be supplemented by a set of IMPLICATIONAL RULES of the following types:

ex. 8—20

- (a) HUMAN → ANIMATE
- (b) MALE → not FEMALE
- (c) FEMALE → not MALE
- (d) MALE → ANIMATE
- (e) FEMALE → ANIMATE

By introducing these implicational rules, one can simplify a fully specified form to a much simpler form:

ex. 8—21

boy: ANIMATE and HUMAN and MALE and not
FEMALE and not ADULT → HUMAN and
MALE and not ADULT

The semantic contrasts in the above examples are binary taxonomic ones. However, not all semantic contrasts are of this kind. There are oppositions which involve more than two terms and which can be called multiple taxonomies, such as colour terms and kinds of metal. Neither are all oppositions taxonomic. Many binary constructs, such as "*rich/poor*", "*old/young*", "*large/small*", etc., are to be regarded as relative rather than absolute on a scale running between two poles or extremes. These polar oppositions include a middle ground, which implies the existence of a norm that can either be object-related, or speaker-related, or role-related. There is a further type of binary opposition, a relation which involves a contrast of direction. Examples are "*own/belong to*", "*up/down*", "*before/after*", "*left/right*", etc.

Another less common type is hierarchic oppositions, which are like multiple taxonomies, except that they include an element of ordering. Days of the week and months of the year are good examples. Finally there is an interesting type of binary semantic contrast called an inverse opposition between such pairs as "*all/some*", "*possible/necessary*", "*still/already*", etc. The main logical test for an inverse opposition is whether it obeys a special rule of synonymy which involves (a) substituting one inverse term for another, and (b) changing the position of a negative in relation to the inverse form. For example:

ex. 8-22

It is NECESSARY	NOT to go =
It is NOT POSSIBLE	to go.

It is to be further noticed that binary oppositions frequently have a marked term and an unmarked term: that is, the terms are not entirely of equal weight, with the unmarked one being neutral or positive in contrast to the other. Take the pair "*old/young*" for example, "*old*" is unmarked, because we can use "*How old are you?*" without implying that the person is old.

In spite of the criticisms and problems it has had to face, componential analysis is justified because the contrasts and combinations of meaning are necessary and sufficient to explain relevant data. They can be used to explain such meaning relations as hyponymy and incompatibility, which can be used to define such basic statements as synonymy, entailment, inconsistency, tautology, contradiction, presupposition, and semantic anomaly.

8.5.2 Predication analysis

The meaning of a sentence is not merely the sum of the meanings of the words which compose it. PREDICATION ANALYSIS is an important step in our analysis of sentential meaning.

The predication is the common category shared by propositions, questions, commands, etc. Predication analysis is to break down predications into their constituents: ARGUMENTS (logical participants) and a PREDICATE (a relational element). Between them, the predicate is the major or pivotal element and governs the arguments. We may distinguish between a two-place predicate which governs two arguments, a one-place predicate which governs one argument, and a no-place predicate which has no argument at all.

What appear to be three- or four-place predications usually turn out to be combinations of two-place and one-place predications. For instance, “*in front of*” can be regarded as a two-place predicate, “*rise*” (verb), a one-place predicate, and “*rain*” in “*It is raining*” a no-place predicate, because the “*it*” there only fulfils the syntactic requirement, and the following dialogue is not acceptable: **“What is raining?”* **“It.”*.

A predicate may govern not only arguments, but other predicates. When this happens, we have subordinate predications. For example, “*John angered Bill*” can be analysed as to mean “*John caused Bill to become angry*”, with “*John caused*” as the primary predication.

There is a second way in which one predication may be included in another — and that is to reduce its status in the semantic hierarchy still further to the status of a feature. These featurized predications are called down-graded predications. Of course they can either be features of arguments or of predicates. Examples are the underlined parts in the following:

ex. 8—23

- (a) A man who was wearing a wig entered the room.
- (b) He slept for three hours.

8.5.3 Relational components

The semantic analysis of some words presents a complicated picture, because they show relations between two and perhaps more terms.

- (a) father: X PARENT OF Y and MALE X
- (b) mother: X PARENT OF Y and FEMALE X
- (c) son: X CHILD OF Y and MALE X

(d) brother: X CHILD OF PARENT OF Y and MALE X

The same principle can apply to the analysis of predicators. For instance, the meaning of 'have' as it occurs in sentences like "*Peter has many toys*" can be represented by a single component X HAVE Y. In the same way, "give" in "*Mother gives Peter many toys*" can be analysed as Z CAUSE [X HAVE Y]

Based on these understandings, we can compose the semantic components concerned into a whole, such as:

- (a) X lends Z to Y: X HAVE Z and not Z IS OF Y and X CAUSE [Y HAVE Z] and not Z CHANGE TO [Z IS OF Y]
- (b) X takes Y from Z: Z HAVE Y and X CAUSE [X HAVE Y]
- (c) X keeps Y: X HAVE Y and not X CHANGE TO [not X HAVE Y]
- (d) X gets rid of Y: X HAVE Y and X CAUSE [not X HAVE Y]
- (e) die: X CHANGE TO [not ALIVE X]
- (f) kill: X CAUSE [Y CHANGE TO [not ALIVE]]

8.5.4 Logical elements

A predication is not the whole of a proposition. There are other factors in its propositional actualization — the pinning of a predication down to a claim about reality. These logical factors include definiteness, co-reference, tense and time, and other logical operators.

The contrast between definiteness and indefiniteness is a very general semantic phenomenon, most clearly manifest in English in the definite and indefinite articles. The contrast between the two is

unlike any of the semantic oppositions handled in componential analysis. The definite article adds a specifying element of meaning which is simply absent from the indefinite article. The use of the definite article conveys a presupposition by the speaker that there is a certain entity that can be identified uniquely in the contextual knowledge shared by speaker and hearer. The definite article creates exceptions to the meaning relations. For instance, "*I saw a tulip*" entails "*I saw a flower*", but "*I saw the tulip*" does not entail "*I saw the flower*".

The relations of truth-value depend considerably on assumptions of co-reference — assumptions that different arguments or predicates refer to the same piece of reality. For instance, in the following two sentences: "*There is a book on the table*" and "*The book is mine*", "*the book*" in the second sentence refers back to "*a book*" in the first. Co-reference is part of meaning. If two arguments have the same reference, they share the same meaning.

Tense of the verb has a role in the actualization of predications. We cannot tell whether a proposition is true unless we can determine the point or period of time to which it applies. The meaning of tenses are in fact a special case of definite reference, where the definite feature occurs within a downgraded predication of time. Co-reference enters into the interpretation of tense, and the linguistic phenomenon of "sequence of tenses" depends on this fact.

There are other logical operators such as "*not*", "*and*", "*or*", "*some*", "*all*", "*if*", "*true*", "*false*", etc. The term "LOGICAL OPERATOR" reflects the fact that these meaning elements are often thought of as performing operations. They are the controlling elements of the semantic system.

In all, actualization is a matter of degree, and in practice the semantics of sentences, like the semantics of words, has its built-in tolerance of inexactitude.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

reference	entailment
semantic triangle	presupposition
structural meaning	componential analysis
hyponymy	logical operator
homonymy	predication

2. Basing yourself on the model of componential analysis, analyze the following words:

teacher
typewriter
chopsticks

3. Circle the two-place predicates in the list below:

attack(verb), die(verb), between, put, love(verb), in, cat, elephant, forget.

4. Which is the superordinate term in the following list:

man, stallion, male, boy, bull, boar.

5. Assume constancy of reference of names in both questions, tell what sense relation holds between the two pairs of sentences:

(1) A John is the father of Henry.

B Henry is the son of John.

(2) A Jim is fatter than Neil.

B Jim is fatter than Kathleen and Kathleen is fatter than Neil.

6. Of the following pairs of sentences, say whether A entails B in each case.

- (1) A John is a bachelor.
B John is a man.
- (2) A Eliza plays the fiddle.
B Someone plays a musical instrument.
- (3) A I've done my homework.
B I haven't brushed my teeth.
- (4) A Some of the students came to my party.
B Not all of the students came to my party.
- (5) A Mary owns three canaries.
B Mary owns a canary.
- (6) A John picked a tulip.
B John didn't pick a rose.

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9. WRITING

9.1 The growth of writing

Language can be realized either by speech with sound as medium or by writing with visual symbols as medium.

No one could tell when mankind began to develop the writing system to facilitate communication. It was only in myth, legend, or religious literature that names of inventors of some writing systems were given, such as Cadmus of Greece, Chang Jie in ancient China, the Babylonian God Nebo, the Egyptian God Thorh, and Allah of Islamic teaching. None of their legendary deeds can stand as a scientific evidence.

9.1.1 The iconic stage

Following archaeological findings, the earliest primitive pictures extant are cave drawings found in Northern Spain in caves inhabited by humans 20,000 years ago. Whether these pictures were drawn for esthetic purposes or for communication remains unclear. What we are ready to accept is the view that the earliest forms of our written signs were nearly all pictorial or diagrammatic, that is, iconic. This could be attested by pictures discovered among African tribes, American Indians, Alaskan Eskimos, the Incas of Peru, the Yukagirians of Siberia, the people of the Oceanic, etc.

9.1.2 Word writing

Writing made its appearance only when there was a fixed cor-

respondence between the pictures or inscriptions on clay, bones, shells or stones and the language. These inscriptions fall mainly into two kinds:

(1) Pictogram. PICTOGRAM refers to an inscription which represents the features of a physical object. The Hebrew orthography still reflects traces of its pictorial origin. For instance, the letter "a" (aleph) imitates the head of an ox, "b" (beth) imitates a horse, and "g" (gimel) the head of a camel. Many of the Chinese characters derived from pictograms.

Even today pictograms are still widely used, say, in international road signs and signs on public toilets.

The advantage of pictograms is that they can be easily understood by anyone.

(2) Ideogram. IDEOGRAM means idea picture or idea writing. In order to express the attribute of an object or concepts associated with it, the pictogram's meaning had to be extended. For instance, a picture of the sun does not necessarily represent the object itself, but connotes "warmth", "heat", "light", "daytime", etc. However, before this convention was agreed upon by the whole speech community, its extended meaning could be anybody's guess, to the disadvantage of communication.

To make things more complex, there was difficulty to express abstract notions by ideograms, especially grammatical notions, such as "fancy" or "would be". One might get round of it by drawing a "fan" and "sea" in one picture or "wood" and "bee" in another picture. Again, before the ancient speakers knew the sound system of their language, there was confusion in interpreting the ideograms in question.

In spite of all these disadvantages, the latter form of ideograms

turned out to be linguistic symbols, symbols for the sounds of these objects. This process is termed the “rebus principle”, that is to say, writing is like a riddle composed of words or syllables depicted by symbols or pictures that suggest the sound of the words or syllables they represent.

9.1.3 Syllabic writing

Possibly influenced by the Sumerians, the Egyptians developed a word-syllabus writing system. The Egyptian system of syllable signs contained two sets of combinations.

(1) 1 consonant (and 1 vowel). The syllabary is of CV structure or simply C, e.g., *ma, me, mi, mu, m...*

(2) 2 consonants and 1—2 vowels. Here, the symbol stands for 2 syllables or a complex syllable, e.g. *tama, tame, tem, tma,...*

About 3,500 years ago, the Egyptian's one-consonant syllabary (CV) was imitated by the Phoenicians, who, by the time of 1,000 B.C., succeeded in developing a completely syllabic form of writing with no word signs. Vowels were not represented in this West Semitic Syllabary.

9.1.4 Sound writing

When the Greeks borrowed the system from the Semitic languages, they found the syllabic system inefficient because Greek had a complex syllabic structure and felt the need to record vowels. So they turned to the symbols of the Phoenician writing system to represent the individual sounds. This marked the beginning of sound writing.

Later, the Romans derived their alphabet from the capital letters of the Greek alphabet. From then on, the Roman or Latin

alphabet was spread throughout the world.

9.2 The writing system

The writing system has now become a level in a written language which is parallel to phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. To those languages adopting the alphabetic writing system, it is given the name ORTHOGRAPHY. Out of hundreds of written-languages today, writing systems fall into three types.

9.2.1 Word writing system

Chinese is the most representative of this set. In Chinese, each character represents an individual word or morpheme in relation to meaning. Therefore, it can also be called "morpheme-writing system". Some longer words may have more than one morpheme, such as "mǎimài" (买卖). Since each morpheme consists of several strokes of different shapes, and some have more than twenty strokes, such a system is inconvenient for learning. In 1956, the government took measures to simplify the characters by reducing the strokes. In the meantime, a spelling system based on the Roman alphabet was adopted.

In spite of all this, the Chinese word-writing system will stay. Not only is it regarded as part of Chinese culture and an art, but through it speakers of all the Chinese dialects can communicate.

Some of the Chinese characters are still used by the Japanese and Koreans.

Traces of word writing can be found in every writing, such as "\$", "%", "&", "@", "¢", etc.

9.2.2 Syllabic writing system

Apart from the borrowing of Chinese characters, the Japanese modified some of the Chinese characters to represent their fifty syllables. Two sets of forms were created: hiragana and Katakana. They were once used to indicate grammatical forms but they are now being used to replace some of the Chinese characters, e.g. in the word "*kakimashita*", "*kaki*" is a variant of the root morphemic word "*kaku*" (write) with its stem-formative, "*-ta*" represents the past tense morpheme, and "*mashi*" is a variant of the honorific form "*masu*" with its stem formative.

Theoretically, all Japanese words could be written in the fifty-character syllabary. The reason for Japanese to retain 1850 Chinese characters in their language is due to the fact that there are so many homophones in Japanese. For instance, the syllabary "*ka*" has dozens of meanings. With the dual word/syllable system, each "*ka*" can be indicated by a separate character, and confusion in decoding can be avoided.

9.2.3 Sound writing system

The sound writing system or alphabetic writing system has dominated most of the world languages. Since most European alphabets such as Spanish, German, French, English, etc. derived from the Latin alphabet, only minor adjustments were needed to cope with individual characteristics of a particular language.

The Cyrillic or Slavic alphabet is a variant of the Greek alphabet. It is now used by the Russians, Serbs, Bulgarians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

Some Asian and African countries, when devising the writing system for their speech, also borrowed from Latin alphabets, such

as Turkish, Indonesian, Swahili, Vietnamese, etc.

Some newly independent countries after the Second World War have used the IPA phonetic symbols directly.

The immense power of the sound writing system is its productivity. There are more than 600,000 entries in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, and the syllabic structures in English are rather complex and varied, such as:

ex. 9—1

I	V	an	VO
key	CV	ant	VCC
ski	CCV	ants	VCCC
spree	CCCV	pant	CVCC
seek	CVC	pants	CVCCC
speak	CCVC	splints	CCCVCCC
scram	CCCVC	stamp	CCVCC
striped	CCCVCC	strengths	CCCVCCCC

With the magic of twenty-six alphabetic symbols plus a few punctuation marks, all the words and syllables can be satisfactorily represented.

9.3 Graphemics

9.3.1 Graphemes

Similar to phonology and morphology which consist of phonemes and morphemes respectively, a writing system consists of a set of graphemes plus characteristic features of their use. Here, a GRAPHEME is the minimal contrastive unit in the writing system of a language. The English grapheme <A> is thus represented as A, a, α, etc. The Greek letter "*sigma*" is written as "s" at the end

of words, and “ δ ” elsewhere. Its graphemic form is < δ >.

9.3.2 Reference

The writing system being the representation of speech, each grapheme represents some portion of the structure of the associated or underlying structure. So the phoneme is the REFERENCE of the grapheme in a sound writing system. For instance, the reference of the English grapheme generally is /b/, and <X> is /ks/.

However, more than one phoneme can be represented by one single letter or grapheme, e.g. the grapheme <O> can represent phonemes as in

ex. 9—2

so	/səʊ/
money	/ˈmʌni/
tonic	/ˈtɒnɪk; ˈtɑnɪk/
together	/təˈgeðə/
sob	/sɒb/

Graphemes with morphemic reference are commonly called ideograms. Some have single-valued reference, such as (木), (?), ({) in Chinese. Some have multi-valued morphemic reference, such as the grapheme <+> represents “*plus*”, “*and*”, “*more*”, etc.

Individual graphemes can stand for individual phonemes (as in alphabetic writing) or for sequence of phonemes (as in syllabic writing).

9.4 Writing and speech

9.4.1 The graphemic system and the phonological system

Ideally, a writing system should have one-to-one correspon-

dence between phonemes and graphemes. The phoneme /p/ in English can have two forms, such as (p^h) and (p') in "pie" and "spy"; in writing, a single grapheme is needed.

No alphabetic writing system can represent every sub-system in the phonology of the spoken language on which it is based, such as tone of voice, pitch contrast, vowel length, etc.

If the tone of voice is to be represented, one has to express it as a parenthetical remark or third person narrative, such as "(She said indignantly)".

With regard to pitch contrast, the Chinese and Vietnamese have attempted to use symbols over the vowels to indicate the proper tone, such as "mā, má, mǎ, mà" in Chinese Pinyin, and "ma, má, mǎ, mǎ, mā, ma." in Vietnamese. In French, the symbol "A" is used to express vowel length. It has to be pointed out that early in 1446, King Sejong of Korea promulgated an alphabet in which certain strokes of the characters represent phonetic characteristics such as tongue position or force of articulation. This has been highly valued by linguists today.

However, native users do not have to bother about pitch contrast; they tend to omit the pitch markers in writing. For instance, the English word "increase" can be both a verb /ɪn'kri:z/ or a noun /'ɪŋkri:z/, but there is only one writing form. The expression "e shou cheng qing" (额手称庆) in Chinese Pinyin, as a matter of fact, should be "é shǒu chēng qing".

Finally, some conventions in writing systems are sometimes related to speech, for instance, capital letters and italics in printing can express emphasis and quotation marks are often accompanied by pauses.

9.4.2 Variation in graphemic representation

Although a written language is a representation of a spoken language, there is some latitude of free variation.

ex. 9—3

/ˈdʌfəl/	duffel; duffle
/ˈdɒpi/	dopey; dopy
/ˈenvɔɪ/	envoy; envoi
/ɪnˈtrentʃ/	entrench; intrench

Some variants are of the dialectal type, especially between the British English and American English

guage being reduced to writing is only their second language. Take China for example, the writing systems designed for national minorities in southwestern provinces are based on the Roman alphabet through the collective efforts of linguists. The same is true of a very large number of languages of Asia, Africa and America.

9.4.4 The disparity between speech and writing

While phonology has always seen active changes in the course of time, orthography undergoes a relatively much slower change. As a result, orthography could no longer fit pronunciation, such as the sound /t/ is not pronounced in the word "*often*" by some speakers of English today, but its old spelling form is preserved. Some words might have changed their graphetic representation, their old forms are not necessarily immutable, such as "*hee*", "*certain*", "*sonnes*", "*giue*", "*diuideth*", "*vntō*", etc.

In order to make spelling accord with the changing pronunciation, spelling reform has been carried out in many languages. This can be seen from official efforts in Scandinavian countries. The Swedish government revised the orthography of the Swedish language almost once each generation. The Americans played an active role in introducing new spelling forms to English, such as "*labor*" (labour), "*favor*" (favour), "*traveled*" (travelled), "*center*" (centre), "*jail*" (gaol),Some even went to the extreme to start a spelling reform movement, say **The Chicago Tribune**, once introduced words such as "*thru*" (through), "*tho*" (though), "*nite*" (night), but spelling habits are hard to change, and the reformers had to admit their failure. On the contrary, the old and simple form "*rime*" is now replaced by a complex form "*rhyme*". Therefore, innovations are a wholly unpredictable matter.

9.4.5 The importance of writing

No one would doubt the primacy of speech. It is generally held in linguistics that speech is the “primary medium”, writing the “secondary”. The former has a history of at least 100,000 years, whereas the latter only about 6,000 years. Genetically, children learn to speak before they learn to write. Anthropologically, tens of millions of people in the present world speak languages with no written forms and have only oral literature.

The primacy of speech does not lead to the conclusion that writing is unimportant. Human memory is short-lived and the brain’s storing capacity is finite, but these defects can be overcome with the help of writing. Writing can transcend time and space, whereas speech could not do so before this century. After the introduction of films, radios, recorders and television, this function of writing cannot be dispensed with. Without writing, there would be no knowledge of electronics for TV technicians to study, to say nothing of science, literature, mails, newspapers, etc.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms.

iconic	orthography
pictogram	word writing
ideogram	sound writing
syllabary	grapheme
alphabet	reference
2. Answer the following questions.
 - (a) Why is speech prior to writing?
 - (b) Why is writing very important?

- (c) Why can't we do away with Chinese characters?
- (d) Why do Japanese want to preserve some of the Chinese characters?
3. Give a conventional word symbol for each of the following.
- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| half _____ | percent _____ |
| equals _____ | at...a piece _____ |
| divided by _____ | male _____ |
| female _____ | star _____ |
| cent _____ | and _____ |

4. From the following list of words, compile the spellings of the vowels and consonants that follow the list.

hut	put	does	obey	easily
guard	ghost	veil	weight	along
dungeon	rate	wolf	rough	blood
porpoise	pain	villain	steak	give
none	would	gauge	play	book
physics	thin	trait		

/ə/ _____

/ʌ/ _____

/s/ _____

/ei/ _____

/g/ _____

/f/ _____

/z/ _____

/s/ _____

5. Each of the following sentences is ambiguous (can have more than one meaning) in the written form. How can these sentences be made unambiguous when they are spoken?
- (a) John punched Bill and then he kicked him.

- (b) What are we having for dinner, Mother?
 - (c) She's a German language teacher.
 - (d) They formed a student grievance committee.
 - (e) Charles kissed his wife and George kissed his wife, too.
6. In the written form, the following sentences are not ambiguous, but they would be if spoken. State the devices used in writing which make the meanings explicit.
- (a) They're my brothers' keepers.
 - (b) He said, "He will take the garbage out."
 - (c) The red book was read.
 - (d) The flower was on the table.

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10. LANGUAGE VARIATION

10.1 The changing language

It has been observed that language is something which behaves like animate beings. The fact that people talk about the growth and death of a certain language is no longer a wonder. The dying out of many Indian languages on the American continent, which once challenged the efforts of a whole generation of American structuralists, has long been known to the rest of the world. Sometimes we could even find the rebirth of a language, Hebrew in Israel for example. This at least shows that language has been constantly changing.

Changes can take place at different levels of language.

10.2 Lexical change

Changes in lexis strike our eyes most quickly and easily. Terms such as "*Nuke*", "*transistor*", "*ALGOL*" (algorithmic language), "*loxygen*" (liquid oxygen), "*anacom*" (analogic computer)... in science and technology; "*videotape*", "*refrigerator*", "*deep freeze*", "*Coke*"... in our economic life, "*NATO*", "*OPEC*", "*cold war*", "*hot line*"... in politics, "*space war*", "*grunt*", "*H-bomb*", "*guided missile*", "*supersonic jet*"... in military affairs, and "*counter culture*", "*hippies*", "*chairperson*", "*acid rock*", "*teenybopper*", "*uppers*", "*downers*"... in the cultural field have all come into appearance in the past decades. Even in education, one can find new expressions in circulation such as "*underachiever*", "*open classroom*", "*TA*",

"*grade-point average*", "*CAI*", "*pass-fail grading*" and others.

On the other hand, one can also witness the disappearance of some words in lexicon once they lost the favour of the speech community. Words such as "*beseem*" (to be suitable), "*fain*" (gladly), "*mammet*" (a doll or puppet), "*wot*" (to know), etc. in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* are out of use today.

New words or expressions are added to English through various processes.

10.2.1 Invention

Since economic activity is the most important and dynamic in human life, many new lexical items come directly from the consumer items, Their producers or their brand names, such as "*Kodak*", "*Coke*", "*nylon*", "*Xerox*", "*Frigiduire*", "*granola*" and others to cope with the INVENTION of new entities.

10.2.2 Compounding

New words are sometimes constructed by combining two old words. This is the process of COMPOUNDING as mentioned in Chapter 5. Compound words may be of the following types:

(1) Completely united: *moonwalk*, *earthrise*, *microform*, *playback*, *babysit*, *intercommunication*, *overkill*, *pantyhose*, *megadeath*, *litterbag*....

(2) Hyphenated: *off-track*, *do-gooding*, *fall-out*, *joy-stick*, *drop-in*, *teach-in*, *far-out*, *goof-off*....

(3) Accepted as standard phrase: *neutron stars*, *black hole*, *black belt*, *genetic code*, *truth set*, *integrated circuit*, *microwave oven*, *fake book*, *captive audience*, *cloud nine*....

There is no simple rule for hyphenation of compounds, but one

can roughly make a distinction between noun and adjective as expressed in the following use and omission of the hyphen, such as “*high frequency*” (noun) and “*high-frequency*” (adjective). The great danger with such compounds is that they tend to become overlong and unwieldy.

10.2.3 Blending

BLENDING is a relatively complex form of compounding, in which two roots are blended by joining the initial part of the first root and the final part of the second root, or by joining the initial parts of the two roots. They can be exemplified by the two sets in ex. 10—1 respectively.

ex. 10—1

(a)	transistor	transfer + resister
	smog	smoke + fog
	positron	positive + electron
	boatel	boat + hotel
	urinalysis	urine + analysis
	cremains	cremated + remains
(b)	anacom	analog + computer
	digicom	digital + computer
	insulac	insulating + lacquer

Blending can also occur at a high cognitive level. From the similarity in the two expressions “*She was on the verge of a crackup*” and “*She was on the verge of breakdown*”, the confusion of “*crackup*” and “*breakdown*” leads to the coining of “*crackdown*”. The same is true of “*riffle*” (ripple + shuffle), “*stample*” (trample + stamp on), “*spinwheels*” (pinwheel + spin), and “*rampacious*” (rampageous + rapacious). This sort of blending is labelled specially as

FUSION.

10.2.4 Abbreviation

A great number of English words have undergone the process of ABBREVIATION in their etymological history. It is also called CLIPPING, that is, a new word (as shown in the left column) is created by:

ex. 10—2

(a) Cutting the final part (or with a slight variation)

deli	delicatessen
math	mathematics
prof	professor
doc	doctor
mod	modern
narc	narcotics agent
telly	television
bike	bicycle
mayo	mayonnaise

(b) Cutting the initial part

phone	telephone
van	caravan
bus	omnibus
copter	helicopter

On some rare occasions, both the initial part and the final part are clipped off with the middle part preserved, such as the word “*tec*” is derived from “*detective*”.

10.2.5 Acronym

ACRONYM is made up from the first letters of the name of

an organization, which has a heavily modified headword.

ex. 10—3

WB (World Bank)

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and
Cultural Organization)

EEC (European Economic Community)

CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)

PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)

This process is also widely used in shortening extremely long words or word groups in science, technology and other special fields.

ex. 10—4

EEG (electroencephalogram)

radar (radio detecting and ranging)

mobidic (mobile digital computer)

MANIAC (mathematical analyser numerical integrator and
computer)

COBOL (common business oriented language)

WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant)

VAT (value added tax)

10.2.6 Metanalysis

METANALYSIS refers to a process through which a division is made where there were none before.

ex. 10—5

a nadder → an adder

a napron an apron

richesse rich - es

peace pea - s

cherise cherry - es

It is obvious that the hearers have made their own morphological and phonological analysis of the words, but their misinterpretation is accepted by the speech community.

10.2.7 Back-formation

BACK-FORMATION refers to an abnormal type of word-formation where a shorter word is derived by deleting an imagined affix from a longer form already present in the language. This is a special kind of metanalysis, which is combined further with analogical creation.

ex. 10-6

gangling	→	gangle
editor		edit
peddler		peddle
hawker		hawk
enthusiasm		enthuse
inept		ept
television		televise
laser		lase
calmative		calm
free association		free-associate

The term "*applied linguist*" from "*applied linguistics*" is a case of special back-formation, which is preceded with a sort of fusion first.

10.2.8 Analogical creation

The principle of ANALOGICAL CREATION can account for the co-existence of two forms, regular and irregular, in the con-

jugation of some English verbs.

ex. 10—6

	old	new
work	wrought	worked
beseech	besought	beseeched
slay	slew	slayed

Analogical creation is to be distinguished from overgeneralization. The latter is regarded as a mistake in the use of language.

10.2.9 Borrowing

English in its development has managed to widen her vocabulary by BORROWING words from other languages. Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Arabic and other languages have all played an active role in this process. Here are some of the examples:

ex. 10—7

Greek: *flokati*, *apocynthion*, *obstetrics*, *epilepsy*, *electricity*, *atom*,....

Latin: *cancer*, *tumor*, *alias*, *injunction*, *alibi*, *affidavit*, *subpoena*, *pp.* (pages), *LL.B.* (bachelor of laws), *i.e.* (that is), *e.g.* (for example), *etc.* (etcetra),...

French: *mortgage*, *apres-ski*, *extraordinaire*, *bidonville*, *entail*,....

Spanish: *macho*, *flotilla*, *grandee*, *junta*, *siesta*, *renegade*,....

Italian: *autostrada*, *ciao*,....

German: *gemutlich*, *rankfurter*, *hamburger*, *delicatessan*, *thick-milk*, *fat-cakes*,....

Chinese: *wok*, *kung-fu*,....

Japanese: *Jodo*

Borrowing can be done directly or indirectly. For instance,

the word "*feast*" was borrowed directly from middle French "*festa*", and the word "*algebra*" was borrowed indirectly from Arabic through Spanish. Many English words of Greek origin are borrowed via Latin or French.

There are several types of processes with regard to borrowing.

(1) **LOANWORDS**: The borrowing of **LOANWORDS** is a process in which both form and meaning are borrowed with only a slight adaptation to the phonological system of the new language in some cases. For instance, English borrowed "*au pair*", "*encore*", "*coup d'etat*" and others from French, "*al fresco*" (in the open air) from Italian, "*tea*" from Chinese, "*sputnik*" from Russian and "*moccasin*" (a type of shoe) from an American Indian language.

(2) **LOANBLEND**: **LOANBLENDING** is a process in which part of the form is native and part is borrowed, but the meaning is fully borrowed. In English, the first parts of the words "*coconut*" and "*Chinatown*" came from Spanish and Chinese respectively, but the second parts are of English origin.

(3) **LOANSHIFT**: **LOANSHIFTING** is a process in which the meaning is borrowed, but the form is native. "*Bridge*" is an English word, but when it refers to a type of card game, the meaning was borrowed from the Italian "*ponte*". The English word "*artificial satellite*" is also a case of loan-shift to counteract the Russian "*sputnik*".

(4) **LOAN TRANSLATION**: **LOAN TRANSLATION** is a special type of borrowing, in which each morpheme or word is translated in the equivalent morpheme or word in another language. For instance, the English word "*almighty*" is a literal translation from the Latin "*omnipotens*". This is also called "**calque**", which may be a word, a phrase, or even a short sentence.

The English expression "*free verse*" was translated from Latin's "*vers libre*". "*Black humour*" is a loan translation from French "*humour noir*", so is "*found object*" from French "*objet trouve*". Finally, the aphorism "*The style is the man himself*" was translated from Buffon's "*Le style est l'homme meme*".

10.3 Phonological change

Phonological change is related to language variation in the phonological system of language. It refers to change in sound, not word. The diphthong /au/ was pronounced as the long vowel /u:/ in Chaucer's time.

ex. 10—8

mus /mu:s/	mouse /maus/
hus /hu:s/	house /haus/
ut /u:t/	out /aut/
sup /su:θ/	south /sauθ/

Another example is the change of /x/ into /f/ on some occasions such as "*rough*" or "*tough*", or /k/ on some other occasions, such as "*elk*".

Why the pronunciation of sounds should have changed among the speakers remains a mystery. However, here are some factors which contribute to the formation of new pronunciation.

10.3.1 Loss

The LOSS OF SOUND can first refer to the disappearance of the very sound as a phoneme in the phonological system. Take the sound /x/ in O.E. again for example, apart from having changed into /f/ or /k/ in some words as mentioned, this velar fricative was simply lost between the times of Chaucer and Shakespeare.

ex. 10-9

O.E. holh/holx/	→	hollow/'holəu/
sorh/sorx/		sorrow/'sorəu/
niht/nixt/		night/naɪt/
drugath/druxt/		drought/draʊt/

Sound loss can also occur in utterances at the expense of some unstressed vowels.

ex. 10-10

temperature /'temperətʃə/	→	/'temprətʃə/
laboratory /lə'borətri/		/'ləbrətori/
cabinet /'kæbənet/		/'kæbnət/
postscript /'pəʊstskript/		/'pəʊskript/

The extreme case is the four occurrences of 'n' in the utterance "*The pen 'n pencil 'n the drawer are better 'n typewriter to copy 'n easy thing like that.*" They stand for "and, in, than, an" respectively.

10.3.2 Addition

Sounds can be lost but they can also be added to the original sound sequence. Take the Latin word "*studium*" for example, by means of addition, it becomes "*estudie*" in O.F., "*estudio*" in Spanish, "*estudo*" in Portuguese. Only in modern French, did "*estudie*" become "*etude*" after undergoing a process of loss of the sound /s/. The Japanese language is good at adding a vowel to each of the consonants to form syllables which are characteristic of Japanese way of organizing their sounds. For instance, the English word "*strike*" is pronounced as "*sutoruiki*" after it was borrowed by the Japanese. In English, the word "*rascalion*" (rogue) was formed by adding the bilabial /p/ to the root "*rascal*".

10.3.3 Metathesis

METATHESIS is a process involving an alteration in the sequence of sounds. Metathesis had been originally a performance error, which was overlooked and accepted by the speech community. For instance, the word "*bird*" was "*brid*" in O.E. The word "*ask*" used to be pronounced as /aks/ (O.E.: ox, ax), the pronunciation of which still exists in some of the dialects. "*Tax*" and "*task*" are now two different words, but they were etymologically related and still show a similarity in meaning. Compare the following two expressions.

ex. 10—11

- (a) They taxed him with his failures. (accused)
- (b) They took him to task for his failures. (scolded)

10.3.4 Assimilation

ASSIMILATION refers to the change of a sound as a result of the influence of an adjacent sound, which is called "contact" or "contiguous" assimilation. The assimilative processes at work in languages could be explained by the "theory of least effort", that is, in speaking we tend to exert as little effort as possible so that we do not want to vary too often places of articulation in uttering a sequence of sounds.

Assimilation takes place in quick speech very often. For instance, in expressions such as "*immobile*", "*irrevocable*", "*impolite*"; "*illegal*", the negative prefixes "*im-*", "*il-*" or "*ir-*" should be "*in-*" etymologically.

Sometimes assimilation could occur between two sounds which are not too far separated. For instance, "*discussing shortly*" (/s/ becomes /ʃ/) and "*confound it!*" (/ə/ becomes /au/). This is called

“non-contiguous” or “distant” assimilation.

10.3.5 Dissimilation

DISSIMILATION is just the opposite of assimilation. It refers to the influence exercised by one sound segment upon the articulation of another sound, so that the sounds become less alike. As there are two /r/ sounds in the Latin word “*peregrinus*”, the first segment had to dissimilate into /l/, hence the English word “*pilgrim*”. Other examples are “*purple*” from “*purpre*”, “*glamor*” from “*grammar*”, etc.

10.4 Grammatical change

Changes in both morphology and syntax are listed under this heading.

10.4.1 Morphological change

Morphological change in English can be seen obviously in derivation, especially in the conjugation of verbs as shown in the following examples. Those forms in the left column have given way to those in the right column:

ex. 10—12

didst	→	did
hath		has
witnessest		witnesses
sprung		sprang
speakest		speaks
said		said
saith		says

The plural forms of nouns have also changed. For instance,

the plural forms of the words "seed" and "way" are "seeds" and "ways" instead of "seedes" and "wayes". The old forms of the second person "thou, ye, yee" were now entirely replaced by a single form "you", and "thy" by "your". The possessive case presents even a more complex picture. The "'s" form had once existed in O.E., but changed into "of phrase" if the nouns in question were inhuman in M.E., but there is a tendency to see the restoration of old forms such as "*the university's campus*" or "*China's modernization*". What is more, expressions such as "*the Queen of England's crown*" were no longer regarded as ungrammatical. At Chaucer's time, they should have been "*the Queen's crown of England*".

10.4.2 Syntactical change

There are more instances of changes in syntax. The English speaker today no longer uses the fifteenth century's double comparative, such as "*more gladder*", "*more lower*", "*moost royallest*", "*moost shamefullest*", etc.

In O.E., negation was expressed by particles such as "ne" and "na". At the time of Malory and Shakespeare, negation was expressed by putting the negative particle "not" at the end of the sentence, such as "*He saw you not.*" and "*I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.*" Even in the Bible, the negative particle was put after the verb, such as "*And because they had not root, they withered away.*" Today, the negative element has to follow the finite element, such as "*I am not going*", "*I will not go*", "*I do not want to go*", etc.

Further changes in syntax can be seen in the following examples:

ex. 10—13

—Split infinitive

- (a) I have tried to consciously stop worrying about it.
- (b) Part of your job, as a teacher, is to really understand your pupils' personal problems.

—Postposed prepositions

- (a) What I'm convinced of is China's modernization will surely be a success.
- (b) That person is impossible to work with.

—Objective case of relative pronoun

- (a) The girl who(m) he talked about is a violinist.
- (b) The man who(m) you met will revisit this university next week.

Fusion or blending is also involved in the generation of new phrasal and sentential structures.

ex. 10—14

rarely + hardly even → rarely even

ever and anon + now and then → every now and then

equally good + just as good → equally as good

It's no use getting there before nine + There's no use in getting there before nine → There's no use getting there before nine.

It is noted that once such a fusion comes into shape, it persists and is unlikely to function merely as loose elements and to be substitutable.

10.5 Semantic change

Semantic change plays a very important role in widening the vocabulary of a language. As we know, language being symbolic, each word serves as a symbol in relation to a specific meaning.

In this sense, we need infinite numbers of words or symbols to code the physical entities and our experiences, which will ultimately prove impossible and obstruct the smooth operation of communication. This problem can be solved by making the existing words multise-mous, that is, to give a new concept to an old form, thus the mean-ing of a form is multiplied. There are three kinds of semantic changes.

10.5.1 Broadening

BROADENING is a process to extend or elevate the meaning from its originally specific sense to a relatively general one. For instance, the word "*holiday*" used to mean "*holy day*" in religious English. Today it means a day for rest regardless of its religious nature, so the meaning is widened. More examples are as follows:

ex. 10—15

offend	to strike against→ to create or excite anger
bird	young bird→ any kind of bird
quarantine	forty days (isolation)→ a period of time under enforced isolation
companion	a person with whom you shared bread → a person who accompanies you
pile	heap of stone→ a quantity of objects stacked and thrown together in a heap
subsist	to cause to stand→ to exist
task	tax imposed→ a piece of work

10.5.2 Narrowing

Contrary to broadening, the original meaning of a word can be narrowed or restricted to a specific sense. For instance, the word “*meat*” means “*food*” in the 17th century, but the meaning is now restricted to “*the edible flesh of mammals*”. More examples are listed below:

ex. 10—16

camp	open field→ a place where a body of men are temporarily lodged in tents, huts or other makeshift shelters
cattle	personal property; domestic animals→ animals of the species <i>Bos taurus</i>
girl	young person of either sex→ young woman
liquid	liquid→ an alcoholic beverage made by distillation
orator	one who speaks→ a person skilled in the art of public address
hound	dog→ a special kind of dog
deer	beast→ a particular kind of animal
knight	youth→ a medieval gentleman-soldier

10.5.3 Meaning shift

All semantic changes involve meaning shift. Here MEANING SHIFT is understood in its narrow sense, that is, the change of meaning has nothing to do with generalization or restriction as mentioned above. What makes the meaning of a word different is its departure from its original domain as a result of its metaphorical usage. For instance, the word “*bead*” originally means “*prayer*”, but later it refers to “*the prayer bead*”, the visible manifestation of

a prayer, finally to any "small, ballshaped piece of glass, metal or word".

Sometimes, a word's meaning has to be reinterpreted with overtones. The word "*lust*" meant "*pleasure*" in the past, today it suggests "*sexual craving*". The same is true for the word "*lewd*" (ignorant) to mean "*licentious, lustful, obscene*" today. The extreme cases are words which have changed entirely in its opposite direction. For instance, the word "*silly*" used to mean "*happy*" in O.E. and "*naive*" in M.E. and the word "*nice*" used to mean "*ignorant*".

10.5.4 Class shift

By shifting the word class one can change the meaning of a word from a concrete entity or notion to a process or attribution. The word "*engineer*" as a noun means "*a person trained in a branch of engineering*", but it means "*to act as an engineer*" or "*to plan; to manoeuvre*" when used as a verb.

Compare the following examples:

ex. 10—17

	N	V
stump	the part of a tree trunk left protruding from the ground	to challenge
hog	a pig	to take and keep (all of something) for oneself

10.5.5 Folk etymology

FOLK ETYMOLOGY refers to a change in form of a word or phrase, resulting from an incorrect popular notion of the origin or meaning of the term or from the influence of more familiar terms

mistakenly taken to be analogous. As a result of this modification, the word “*sparrowgrass*” in English derived from “*asparagus*”; the Spanish “*cucaracha*” changed into the English “*cockroach*”. “*Wiz*” in “*He’s a wiz at math.*” is a shortened form of “*wizard*” (*a man who has magic powers, and hence a man of amazing abilities*). However, it was interpreted as “*a man of intellectual quickness*” here, which finally led to the variant “*whiz*”.

10.6 Orthographic change

Changes can also be found at the graphetic level. Since writing is a recoding of the sound system in English, phonological changes will no doubt set off graphetic changes. In the following samples taken from the Bible:

ex. 10—18

(a) The same day went Iesus out of the house, and sate by the seaside. (Matthew 13)

(b) And when the Sunne was vp, they were scorched.
(ibid)

graphetic forms such as “*Iesus*”, “*sate*”, “*Sunne*” were a manifestation of their old pronunciation. They are replaced by “*Jesus*”, “*sat*” and “*sun*” respectively. What is more, the “*v*” in O.E. becomes “*u*”, whereas “*u*” becomes “*v*”.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

blending	loanword
compounding	loanblend
abbreviation	loanshift
acronym	loss

back-formation

assimilation

folk etymology

metathesis

borrowing

meaning shift

analogical creation

2. Find the sources of the following blends. In cases where the dictionary does not provide the answer, your own ingenuity will be your guide.

(a) bash

(f) flare

(b) smash

(g) brunch

(c) glimmer

(h) motel

(d) flimmer

(i) transistor

(e) clash

(j) medicare

3. Determine the historically accurate etymology of the words in the first column, and underline the correct one in the second and third columns.

(a) hangnail

aching nail

hanging nail

(b) female

a male's com-

panion

panion

(c) crayfish

crawling fish

crab

(d) shamefaced

bound by shame

face reflecting shame

(e) Jordan almond

imported almond

garden almond

4. Underline the words or phrases below that demonstrate fusion.

(a) law and order

law and authority

(b) black and white

silver and black

(c) butter and jam

bread and butter

(d) life and happiness

life and death

(e) assault and battery

generator and battery

5. Determine the original term from which the following words

were back-formed.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| (a) asset _____ | (f) automate _____ |
| (b) burgle _____ | (g) donate _____ |
| (c) enthuse _____ | (h) escalate _____ |
| (d) greed _____ | (i) homesick _____ |
| (e) hush _____ | (j) peddle _____ |

6. Identify the immediate etymological source of the following words. (For example, the immediate source of "menage" is French, although the more remote source is Latin.)

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| (a) air _____ | (f) babel _____ |
| (b) barbecue _____ | (g) buffalo _____ |
| (c) bungalow _____ | (h) cocoa _____ |
| (d) cola _____ | (i) costume _____ |
| (e) gusto _____ | (j) ill _____ |

7. Classify the following words as loanwords (LW), loanblends (LB), loanshifts (LS) or loan translation (LT).

- | |
|----------------------|
| (a) firewater _____ |
| (b) booby trap _____ |
| (c) war paint _____ |
| (d) coconut _____ |
| (e) thick milk _____ |
| (f) togobban _____ |
| (g) monk _____ |
| (h) loanword _____ |
| (i) free verse _____ |
| (j) yankee _____ |

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11. VARIETIES OF LANGUAGE

11.1 English or Englishes?

When we observe the kind of English in actual use like the following:

ex. 11—1

- (a) a. Dinner is ready, boys and girls.
b. Dinner is served, ladies and gentlemen.
c. Come and get it, boys!
- (b) a. Please keep quiet, others have gone to sleep.
b. Quietness is requested for the benefit of those who have already retired.

we soon find that the word "English" is a mere generalization of many different types of the language, and we form the idea of "ENGLISHES", or "VARIETIES" or "SUB-LANGUAGES" with the English language. Understanding this fact is important particularly when we want to find a proper way to express ourselves in a given situation.

Catford (1965) has the following to say: "The concept of a 'whole language' is so vast and heterogeneous that it is not operationally useful for many linguistic purposes, descriptive, comparative and pedagogical. It is therefore desirable to have a framework of categories for the classification of 'sub-languages' or varieties within a total language."

Such a framework has been developed in the last two decades by British scholars as Halliday, McIntosh, Stevens, Enkvist,

Spencer and Gregory. Similar work has been done by Dell Hymes and others in the United States.

Generally speaking, varieties of language can be classified in respect of their users and use, the former being dialectal and the latter diatypic. Hence they are called **DIALECTS** and **REGISTERS** respectively.

11.2 Dialect

Traditionally, the notion "DIALECT" is restricted to that kind of language which shows variation in space. It is different from language in that it is considered a distinct entity, yet not distinct enough from other dialects of the language to be regarded as a different language. Today, the interpretation of "dialect" is multi-dimensional. It takes into account all variations arising from differences among users, namely, the space, the temporal factor and the social distance.

11.2.1 Regional dialect

The specific form of a given language used in a certain geographical space is called "GEOGRAPHICAL OR REGIONAL DIALECT", such as Cockney dialect and Yorkshire dialect in Britain, North Midland dialect and South Midland dialect in the United States. The layman term for such regional dialect is "ACCENT".

Serious investigation of regional dialects began in the latter part of the nineteenth century in Germany by a man called Georg Wenker. This study of dialects came to be called "DIALECTOLOGY". Between 1902 and 1908, a French linguist, Jules Gillieron, published the *Atlas Linguistique de la France*. It was a collection of maps showing the prevalence of particular speech forms in

particular areas. Since the turn of the century, this kind of work has been carried out all over the world. In the United States, Hans Kurath and others published their *Linguistic Atlas of New England* between the years 1939 and 1943. Other regional atlases have followed since then.

The Linguistic Atlas published by Kurath and Loman in 1970 shows how Southern England is divided into two main dialect areas, roughly along a line from London to Birmingham.

In the United States, the English spoken in the eastern part divides rather clearly into three big dialect areas, reflecting the settlement of these areas by early migrants from England who brought their dialects with them. For example, the vowel /ɑ:/ was translated by immigrants from the eastern counties of England to New England on the new continent. Later the vowel /ɑ:/ became established as fashionable speech in the parts of the United States which remained the closest ties with England.

It has to be noted that developments in transportation have increased mobility of population, and geographic mobility in turn tends to reduce dialect differences.

11.2.2 Temporal dialect

Apart from the space proper, there is another space which we call "temporal space". The kind of language we use is also determined by the time we live in, and this kind of variety is usually referred to as "TEMPORAL DIALECT". In addition to the differences which could be found obviously and easily between Old English and Medieval English or between Medieval English and Modern English, when we read Shakespeare we will be aware of the difference between present-day English and that of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare called Hamlet "*portly*" without meaning that he was fat. He could write "*the king his men*" where we should write "*the king's men*".

The temporal dialects of a language could be studied either statically or dynamically. For instance, one could carry out a synchronic description of the language of Beowulf, of Chaucer, of Shakespeare or of present-day English. This is kept within the domain of "SYNCHRONIC LINGUISTICS". The other approach is to study dialects from the point of view of their historical developments, which is known as "DIACHRONIC LINGUISTICS" or "HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS".

11.2.3 Social dialect

Dialects which identify where a person is in terms of a social scale are called "SOCIAL DIALECTS" or "CLASS DIALECTS", or SOCIOLECTS" for short. Since we often bind ourselves together in groups for some gain, security, worship, amusement, self-identification and other purposes we share in common, we tend to use the kind of language which is highly stratified in terms of social divisions, such as class, professional status, age and sex. Although the differences are not so fundamental in English, we could still find some usages in vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation which are influenced by the above factors.

11.2.3.1 Sex

Males and females in most countries are considered to have a different linguistic birthright. It is believed that speech and reading problems very often affect the males while females usually learn to talk earlier and learn foreign languages faster and better.

The difference between male speech and female speech is institutionalized to some extent in many countries. For instance, in English there is a great deal that reflects extra politeness in women's speech by leaving a decision open rather than imposing their own ideas or claims on others. Some of the features usually found in women's speech are:

- (1) Frequent use of expressions like "*I'm afraid that...*", "*I'm not sure but...*", "*Maybe I am wrong but...*", etc.
- (2) Abundant use of tag questions as in "*The lesson is terribly interesting, isn't it?*"
- (3) The use of a rising tone in sentences which are not questions syntactically as in response to a question "*May I come in?*", they are often heard to say, "*Yes, please!*" or "*Just a moment, please.*" with a rising tone.
- (4) Female speakers usually talk in a standard form of the language on many occasions on which men do not.
- (5) They use more qualifiers and intensifiers than men, such as, "*awfully*", "*lovely*", "*terribly*", etc.

On the other hand, a man is usually more certain, decisive and solid in his speech and he is also rather free to use "strong" expressions and "rough" languages.

11.2.3.2 Age

Biological factors are most clearly shown in age differences. Children learn to speak through cultural transmission as they grow up. Between five and eight they gradually shift to standard forms. However, linguistic maturity does not totally correspond to biological growth. The brain internalizes language at an ever slowing rate. Consequently when one gets older, he or she will gradually

decrease the ability to learn new things and begin to speak in a way that identifies him or her as old.

At different stages of biological growth, people usually display in their use of language, particularly in their speech, biological trademark. For instance, male speakers will show a gradual lowering of pitch from about fifteen to around forty years of age and a relatively stable level will continue until around sixty, then there will be a rise in their pitch again. Children of about the same age usually speak in the same way because some traits of childhood grammars are passed on from child to child.

It is interesting to note that children are expected to talk like children and adults like adults, but when a child talks like an adult, he will usually be praised or at least encouraged to do so, yet when an adult talks like a child, he will be considered to be silly or insane. This sort of linguistic generation gaps exists in almost all languages.

11.2.3.3 Race

Racial factors in English are best shown in Black English. The historical basis for this variety is the African pidgin. During the slave trade, it was the only language available to the blacks who were thrown together from different language backgrounds. They had to reconstitute the English grammar on the basis of the pidgin and gradually built up a special variety of their own, Black English. With the drop of many inflections, morphology was greatly simplified and so was syntax. The most striking examples are the non-use of the copula "be" under some conditions, and then the system of tenses, as seen in ex. 11—2.

The phonology of Black English also differs from Standard English. In general it seems to have a sharper pitch variation and more

pauses because longer sentences are usually cut into shorter clauses.

ex. 11--2

Some examples of Syntactic Differences Between Standard English and Black English Vernacular

Variable	Standard English	Black Non-standard English
Linking verb	He <u>is</u> going.	He - goin'.
Possessive marker	John's cousin	John-cousin
Plural marker	I have five cents.	I got five cent-.
Third-person singular	He lives in New York.	He live- in New York.
Past tense marker	Yesterday he walked <u>home</u> .	Yesterday he walk-home.
"If" construction	I asked <u>if he did it</u> .	I ask <u>did he do it</u>
Negation	I <u>don't</u> have <u>any</u> .	I <u>don't</u> got <u>none</u> .
Use of "be"	He is here <u>all the time</u> .	He <u>be</u> here.
Subject expression	<u>John</u> moved.	John, <u>he</u> moved.
Verb form	I <u>drank</u> the milk.	I <u>drunk</u> the milk.
Future form	I <u>will</u> go home.	I'ma go home.
Indefinite article	I want <u>an</u> apple.	I want <u>a</u> apple.
Pronoun form	<u>We</u> have to do it.	<u>Us</u> got to do it.
Possessive pronoun	<u>his</u> book	<u>he</u> book
Preposition	He is over at John's house. He teaches <u>at</u> Francis Pool.	He over <u>to</u> John house. He teach - Francis Pool.
Use of "do"	No, he <u>isn't</u> .	No, he <u>don't</u> .

Source: Adapted from Hall and Freedle 1973, p.445

Note: While all the items in the third column are undoubtedly more frequent in black non-standard, not all are exclusive to it.

11.2.3.4 Class

A speaker's command of language is much influenced by his social status. For instance, in the U.S., the speeches of the upper-class speakers and those of the non-upper-class ones do not follow the same phonological patterns entirely.

ex. 11—3

Upper Class	Non-Upper Class
'yesterday	yester'day
'int'resting	inte'resting
acknowledge (rhyme with college)	(make the second syllable rhyme with bowl)
vase (rhyme with bars)	(rhyme with cause or maize)
spoon (rhyme with boon)	(rhyme with the Yorkshire pronunciation of bun)

In vocabulary, the names for the course of a meal which follows the main course vary a lot with different social classes.

ex. 11—4

- pudding (upper and middle classes)
- sweet (middle class)
- dessert (lower middle class)
- afters (lower middle and lower classes)
- pudding (lower class)

The choice of address term can also illustrate the distinction of

one's social class. For instance, it is commonly agreed for the aged to address the young in his first name, such as "*Tom*" or "*Mary*", but the young has to address the aged by putting a title before his first name, such as "*Uncle Peter*", "*Aunt Jane*", etc. And when an inferior addresses his superior, he has to address in the latter's last name preceded with a title, such as "*President Reagan*", "*Senator Stoneback*", "*Professor Stern*", etc.

11.2.4 Standard dialect

There is a particular variety of English which has no connection with a particular region. It is the one with widely accepted and codified grammar and vocabulary, and normally spoken by educated people and used in official documents, news-broadcast, etc. It is known as the "STANDARD DIALECT", usually taught at schools and to non-native speakers. It is the dialect of a language which wins literary and cultural supremacy over the others and gains some kind of institutional support from government administration and news media, and also from individuals who write grammars and books on correct usage. This standard form of language is usually defined in terms of intelligibility. It is possible for all members of a community to speak the standard variety regardless of their social standing.

By standard English, however, we do not mean that there is only one form of standard variety in English. There can be different standards in different parts of the English speaking world. The Standard English spoken in Britain is different from the standard English spoken in the United States.

11.2.5 Ideolect

Just as every speech community has a dialect, every speaker has his own pet words and expressions and special way of expressing his ideas in language. This language variety of individual users is called "IDEOLECT". We often talk of "*Mr. X's English*" or "*Miss Y's English*," because we can detect our friends from the way they speak and write. We can even judge people by their speech before we get to know them. Their voice quality, pitch and stress patterns, and their choice of lexical items and grammatical structures often reveal their personal identity. This uniqueness of individual's speech and writing comes from the combination of all or most of the language features. All these traits of speech, and of writing, especially choice of words and intonation, are therefore considered as easy and clear indicators of one's personality and individuality. Syntax is less obvious in speech, though. In written language, this often leads to questions of style. Hemingway's style of writing is different from that of Mark Twain, and Mark Twain's distinctly differs from Jack London's. There is no doubt certain truth in the saying, "The style is, to an extent, the man."

11.2.6 Categorization of dialectal varieties

All these dialects reflect characteristics relating to one's personal identity, to the time and place in which he lives and to his membership of social class and of a speech community. They are all reasonably permanent characteristics of the user. Together with range of intelligibility, all have a high degree of constancy and belong to the categories of dialectal variety differentiation as described by Gregory (1967) shown in Fig. 1,

**Fig. 1 Suggested Categories of Dialectal Variety
Differentiation**

USER'S		
Situational Categories	Contextual Categories	Examples in English
individuality	idelect	Mr. X's English Miss Y's English
temporal provenance	temporal dialect	Old English Modern English
geographical provenance	geographical dialect	British English American English
social provenance	social dialect	Upper Class English Middle Class English
range of intelligi- bility	standard/non- standard dialect	Standard English Non-standard English

DIALECTAL VARIETIES

DIALECTAL VARIETIES: the linguistic reflection of reasonably permanent characteristics of the user in language situations

Source: Gregory 1967, p. 181

11.3 Register

Apart from speech community context from which are derived various dialectal varieties, there is another kind of situational factor, called generic situation, which is concerned with the user's and receiver's relationships to (i) experience, (ii) to each

other and (iii) to the medium of transmission. This dimension of the situation is also important because it not only reflects the part played by language, but also selects the part which can be played by other forms of intentionally communicative behaviour. This second group of language variety is known as "REGISTERS" or "DIATYPIC VARIETIES". Thus, the selection of one register rather than another in different situations is closely linked with the question of use.

Situationally, the three aspects of language use are all related in a general sense to the role being played by the user in the language event. They are sub-categorized into the user's experience relationship relating to the field of discourse, medium relationship relating to mode of discourse and addressee relationship relating to tenor of discourse.

11.3.1 Field of discourse

FIELD OF DISCOURSE is the linguistic reflection of the purposive role of the language user in the situation in which a text has occurred. The language people use always reflects their desire to make sense. Purposive roles may be technical or non-technical. Non-technical roles such as "establishing personal contact" have a number of possible related fields such as "weather", "health", "current news", while technical roles relate to specialist fields, for example, the linguist giving a lecture in class is expected to use many items like "phonology", "morphology", "syntax",

Grammatical characteristics also seem to be determined by the field of discourse. This results in the recurrence of certain patterns, for example, in scientific writing in English, people tend to use the passive voice and lengthy pre- and post-modification of nominal

heads for definition and precision as economically as possible in space; and in religious prayers, a high incidence of vocative nominal groups, imperative clauses and modal verbal groups.

Technical Englishes are, therefore, field-restricted. In some cases, the subject matter of a discourse restricts the language used so that it becomes fully comprehensive only to people acquainted with that particular topic or specialization. To some extent, we can say that technical Englishes have their own vocabulary and favourite grammatical patterns which are often a necessary part of specialist communication, so Firth put it, "A restricted language serves a circumscribed field of experience or action and can be said to have its own grammar and dictionary." (Firth, 1957).

11.3.2 Mode of Discourse

MODE OF DISCOURSE is the linguistic reflection of the relationship the language user has to the medium of transmission. Language is either spoken or written. Spoken language can be spontaneous or non-spontaneous, and written language may be spoken or just to be read with the eye. When we compare the language being used, we find there are significant differences in it, differences which result from the different transmission intentions of their users.

Specialized texts are usually endophorically cohesive, that is, they hang together by internal reference, they can stand by themselves as pieces of language, and like literary texts, do not need to depend on an immediate situation for full understanding. They are characteristic of the written mode. On the other hand, the "personal contact" and "gossip" fields often produce texts that are fully understandable only by the immediate participants in the lan-

guage event because of their shared knowledge and they often work by exophoric reference, that is reference outside of the text, and are characteristic of the spoken mode. All this shows that there are things we tend to talk about, and there are other kind of things we tend to write about.

11.3.3 Tenor of discourse

When we consider the variation relating to what the user is trying to do with language, whether teaching, persuading, advertising or instructing, we are dealing with addressee relationship—contextually categorized as “TENOR OF DISCOURSE”.

Tenor, as mentioned above, is the category used to describe what language is being used for in the situation. The generic situation of the discourse is often defined in terms of tenor. For instance, an advertisement is by definition an attempt to persuade through both linguistic and visual means and the sermon is designed to exhort and teach.

Some fields of discourse are usually associated with specific tenors, and tenors will also vary with the mode used. Typical of tenor-dominated language is military and political propaganda, the former being commanding, and the latter agitating. Scientific texts tend to be expository in their addressee relationship and usually committed to the written mode.

11.3.4 Categorization of diatypic varieties

Figure 2 provides the suggested categories of diatypic variety differentiation offered by Gregory (1967). The framework of insights and categories presented here is largely applied to, and exemplified from English.

**Fig. 2 Suggested Categories of Diatypic Variety
Differentiation**

USER'S		
Situational categories	Contextual categories	Descriptive contextual varieties
experience	field of	technical English
relationship	discourse	non-technical English
medium	mode of	spoken English
relationship	discourse	written English
addressee	tenor of	political speech
relationship	discourse	cooking recipe

DIATYPIC VARIETIES

DIATYPIC VARIETIES: the linguistic reflection of recurrent characteristics of user's USE of language in situations

11.4 Discourse

Any DISCOURSE can be seen as a configuration of field, mode and tenor. For instance, cooking recipe books belong to a certain field—cooking, a certain tenor—instructing, and a certain mode—written to be read, while a lecture on history belongs to a particular field (history), non-spontaneous speaking of what is written with the purpose of passing on information.

However, there is no static recurring configuration of field, mode and tenor. The configurations are dynamic and variable.

Take "the language of journalism" for example, differences can be found between different newspapers. Even within the pages of a single newspaper, we can find notable differences in the use of language in different sections. This shows that the term "the language of journalism" is rather imprecise. While we have a need for a term to distinguish the language of the media from other varieties, we must bear in mind that individual texts may vary greatly from one another.

The concept of "register" is useful when we want to account for what we do with our language. The choice of items from the wrong register and the mixing of items from different registers are among the most frequent mistakes made by non-native speakers.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

language	register
dialect	tenor of discourse
idelect	field of discourse
speech community	mode of discourse
variety	discourse

2. Consider the following statements from one fourteen-year-old black in a Washington, D.C., poverty area.

- (a) Every day last winter when they would come by to get me I would be busy.
- (b) Tomorrow morning when my mother get up I will be busy.
- (c) Every day, in the morning, when the others get up at my

place **I be busy**.

(d) Every day, in the morning, when you come **I be busy**.
What does **I be** in **I be busy** in (c) and (d) mean in this dialect? Does it mean action in the present, action carried on from the past through the present, and action taking place occasionally, or what?

3. Below are given some words used in **BrE** for which different words are usually used in **AmE**. See if you can find the American equivalents.

- (a) clothes peg:
- (b) braces:
- (c) pram:
- (d) lift:
- (e) waistcoat:
- (f) shop assistant:
- (g) sweets:
- (h) boot (of car).
- (i) bobby:
- (j) spanner:
- (k) biscuits:
- (l) queue:
- (m) torch:
- (n) underground:
- (o) high street:
- (p) crisps:
- (q) chips (fish and chips):
- (r) lorry:
- (s) holiday:
- (t) tin:

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12. LINGUISTIC COMPARISON

LINGUISTIC COMPARISON, the comparison of various parts or aspects of different languages or of one language at its different stages from one or more points of view, forms an important part of general linguistics and of the understanding of the nature and development of world languages.

There are mainly two approaches which have gained recognition: historically orientated linguistic comparison — comparative and historical linguistics, formerly known as **COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY** (the traditional term for the study of language history and literary texts), and typologically orientated linguistic comparison — **LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY**.

12.1 Comparative and historical linguistics

COMPARATIVE AND HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS, as an important branch of diachronic linguistics, is the comparative study of various languages with a view to investigating their historical relationships, and the rules that govern the changes that have occurred in the historical development of these languages, and finally to reconstructing the **PROTOLANGUAGE** from which these languages were derived.

12.1.1 Correspondence

In order to explore any historical relationships, one has first to identify similarities of forms between words and structures in

those languages under study, that is, CORRESPONDENCE. See the correspondence of some lexes between five main European languages.

ex. 12—1

MEANING	ENGLISH	GERMAN	ITALIAN	SPANISH	FRENCH
'hand'	hand	Hand	mano	mano	main
	/hænd/	/hant/	/ˈmano/	/ˈmano/	/mē/
'two'	two	zwei	due	dos	deux
	/tu:/	/tsvai/	/due/	/dos/	/dø/
'me'	me	mich	me	me	moi
	/mi:/	/mɪç/	/me/	/me/	/mwa/
'foot'	foot	Fuss	piede	pie	pied
	/fut/	/fu:s/	/pi'ɛde/	/pi'e/	/pje/

In these word forms, it is clear that the five languages exhibit a general similarity in at least some part of each word. Further examination reveals that the similarity of word forms is only a special case of systematic and regular correspondences between component sound segments in semantically related words. For example, French "*deux*" and English "*two*" exhibit a similarity between /d/ and /t/, and the correspondence can also be matched by other pairs such as "*dent*" and "*tooth*" in the two languages. When examples of this type of correspondences cover the whole range of semantic functions and become too many to be plausibly explained away as coincidental, an explanation is required. Here the only plausible explanation is that the word forms related by one or more correspondences of phonetic composition are the result, after long periods of time, of the gradual divergence and convergence of the languages involved from a single earlier language. This is what is meant by saying that one language is derived from an-

other.

Many theories have been put forward to account for the gradual divergence and convergence of languages. In particular, two sets of factors are distinguished: external causes and internal causes. External causes refer to social separation, geographical separation or linguistic contact, which results in language change. Internal causes refer to gradual changes within the language itself as a result of generations of change or of the general tendency in languages towards economy.

12.1.1.1 Grimm's Law

The basic assumption for the comparative study is that languages are constantly changing and the change is regular and systematic. One instance best illustrating this point is GRIMM'S LAW described by Jacob Grimm in 1822. With the help of consonantal changes following Grimm's Law, one can make a distinction of Germanic languages and Indo-European languages, and Highland German and Lowland German as well. Some of the samples are given as follows:

ex. 12—2

(a) Voiceless plosive → fricative

	Latin	English
p → f	/pater/ (father)	/'fa:ðə/
t → θ	/tres/ (three)	/θri:/
k → h	/cornu:/ (horn)	/hɔ:n/

(b) Voiced plosive → voiceless plosive

	Latin	English
b → p	/labium/ (lip)	/lip/
g → k	/genus/ (kin)	/kin/

d → t	/duo/ (two)	/tu:/
(c) Voiced aspirated → voiced unaspirated		
	Sanskrit	English
bh → b	bhṛata/bhra:ta:/ (brother)	/'brʌðə/
dh → d	vidhava/vidhava:/ (widow)	/'widou/

12.1.1.2 The neo-grammarians

By the latter half of the 19th century, a **group** of young German scholars, styled as the NEOGRAMMARIANS (Junggrammatiker), stressed that sound changes proceed according to fixed laws which suffer no disturbance except when it is in accordance with other laws. To put it the other way round, sound laws are without exceptions. If there is any exception, there must be reasons to account for it. Here are some of the reasons:

(1) Sound laws do not apply to those which only show accidental correspondences, e.g. the Greek word "*mati*" and the Malay word "*mata*" which have the same referent "eye" and are phonetically very similar, must be dismissed as accidental ones, as Greek and Malay are not historically related.

(2) Sound laws must sometimes be modified by a number of subsidiary and more exact statements. For instance, the correspondence between voiceless plosive and fricative does not work when the sounds concerned follow a fricative in the word. Compare the Latin /sta-/ and the English /stænd/ (*stand*).

(3) Those borrowed into the language after the operation of the sound change will be responsible for the particular form that the correspondence takes. For instance, the English loan word

"*dental*" corresponds with its French counterpart "*dental*", but this does not conform to Grimm's Law as English "*tooth*" and French "*dent*" do.

(4) The operation of the sound change in some words has not taken place or a different change has occurred under the influence of analogy. Thus, the past tense forms of "*help*", "*climb*" and "*snow*", which were originally "*holp*", "*clomb*" and "*snew*", have become "*helped*", "*climbed*" and "*snowed*" as a result of analogy with the more common or more regular pattern of the past tense formation in English.

12.1.1.3 The starred letter

When the systematic and regular correspondences between the sound segments in the words compared in different languages are established, they are often for convenience be summarily represented by a single symbol, usually prefixed by an asterisk and referred to as the STARRED LETTER. The significance of the starred letter is its representation of some underlying historical forms from which the other forms derive. Thus *o represents the series English /u/ as in /fut/, Dutch /û/ as in /vût/, German /û/ as in /fûs/ and Swedish /ô/ as in /fôt/. That is to say, /u/, /û/ and /ô/ in the three languages are supposed to derive from the same sound *o historically.

12.1.2 The reconstruction of a proto-language

Two methods can be used to reconstruct an older form of a language: internal reconstruction and the comparative reconstruction.

12.1.2.1 Internal reconstruction

INTERNAL RECONSTRUCTION reconstructs an older form of a language by accounting for any peculiarities of phonological and grammatical distribution in a language that might be explained by means of old inscription, manuscripts and historical documents that have survived. For example, when we find such pair of words as “wisdom/wise” in English, we can assume that, at a previous stage of English, both words contain the same vowel /i/. Now /i/ has become /ai/ in “rise” as a result of diphthongization and vowel shortening.

This method is severely limited as it employs data only from one language.

12.1.2.2 Comparative reconstruction

The method of **COMPARATIVE RECONSTRUCTION** is to reconstruct an older form of a language through the establishment of systematic correspondences by comparing various aspects, mostly word forms, of some related languages. The forms reconstructed are called **PROTOFORMS**, that is, the **STARRED FORMS**, and the languages reconstructed are called **PROTOLANGUAGES**. The modern words used as material in various languages are called their **REFLEXES**. For example, on the basis of the linguistic evidence given, one can reconstruct the following Proto-Germanic (starred) forms:

ex. 12—3

MEANING	ENGLISH	DUTCH	GERMAN	SWEDISH	PROTO GERMANIC
‘man’	/mæn/	/man/	/man/	/man/	*/man/
‘foot’	/fut/	/vūt/	/fūs/	/föt/	*/föt/

In the reconstruction process, the following explanation can be made about these postulated forms. In */man/, a fronting of the vowel in English /a → æ/ has occurred; in */fōt/ the vowel has been raised /ō → ū/ in all the languages except Swedish and has an additional shortening in English /ū → u/; the initial fricative has also become voiced in Dutch /f → v/. Swedish appears to preserve most of the older forms.

In the same way, the following Proto-I-E forms can be reconstructed:

ex. 12—4

English	GREEK	ITALIAN	PERSIAN	SANSKRIT	PROTO-I-E
two/tu/	/duo/	/due/	/do/	/dvā/	*/dwa/
three/θri:/	/treis/	/tre/	/se/	/trayàs/	*/treies/

We must be aware of the limitations of this method:

(1) The term “reconstruction” suggests that the original language could be exactly re-established while, in fact, the starred forms only hypothesize the systematic correspondances exhibited in different languages. Sometimes, the extant evidence can be used to check the result of the reconstruction. For example, the reconstruction of Proto-Romance can be checked against Latin. There are not one-to-one correspondences between the reconstructed Proto-Romance forms and the surviving Latin. The discrepancies still need explanation.

(2) The reconstruction results in a “dialect-free” system, while, in fact, any language may consist of many dialects, and if the dialects become very diverse, it will be difficult to distinguish them from separate languages. And many languages are the result of the widening of the differences between dialects.

12.1.3 Language families

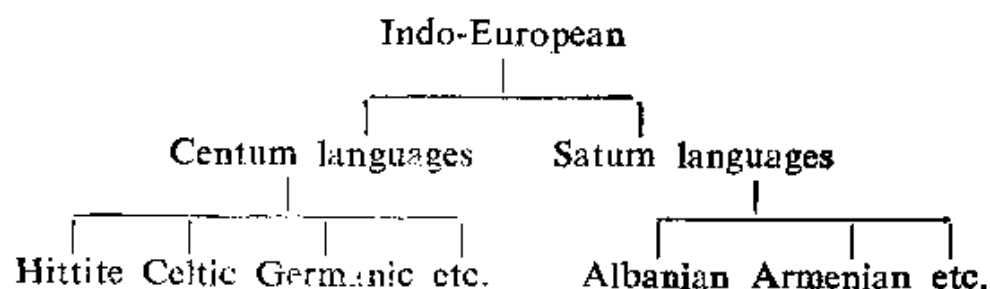
If the protoforms of certain groups of reconstructed protolanguages are compared in the same way as we compare the word forms of certain groups of extant languages concerned, we may find that the languages in each group also exhibit manifest systematic and regular correspondences between them. It means that these groups of protolanguages are derived from some even earlier parent languages. Finally they may all be traced to an original language which no longer exists now. In this sense, it makes possible the groupings of languages into LANGUAGE FAMILIES.

Generally speaking, there are two ways of setting up a language family: the family-tree model and the wave theory.

12.1.3.1 The family-tree model

The FAMILY-TREE MODEL, is to draw an inverted treelike diagram to represent the genetic relationship among languages, such as:

Fig. 1



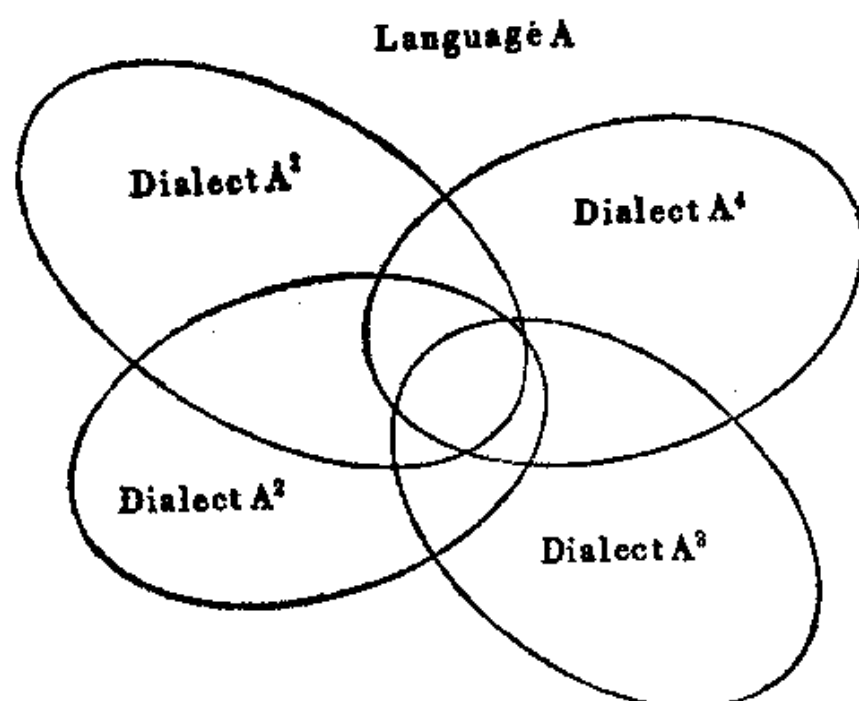
While the family-tree model can indicate the genetic relationship among languages in a systematic way, it also has drawbacks: 1) It suggests that language can beget children and die as people do while actually a language splits itself gradually into various dialects or even separate languages; 2) it suggests sharp separation

between languages, while, sometimes, it is difficult to separate dialects from languages, and as the differences between dialects are widening, the dialects continue to influence each other.

12.1.3.2 The wave theory

The WAVE THEORY shows a language existing in different dialects that overlap each other. As the dialects become separate languages, they continue to influence each other (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2



While the wave theory seems to be more reasonable, the variables in it are much more difficult to control. Therefore, linguists continue to discuss family relationship among languages by "trees" rather than by "waves".

12.1.3.3 Classification of language families

Based on systematic correspondences of word forms, several language families have been recognized.

The Indo-European family includes most of the European languages and many languages spoken in North India and in the two Americas and Australasia. Fig. 3 shows the main branches of the Indo-European family with particular reference to English and other European languages.

The Sino-Tibetan family includes many Chinese languages and some Southeast Asian languages.

The Hamito-Semitic family includes Classic Arabic and the Arabic languages and dialects of the Middle East and North African coast, and Hebrew and other related languages. Maltese, an European language, also belongs to this family.

The Malayo-Polynesian family includes many of the languages spoken in Malay peninsula, Indonesia and the neighbouring islands such as Malay, Sudanese, Javanese, Indonesian, etc.

The Dravidian family includes some languages spoken in India and in N. Ceylon, such as Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu, etc.

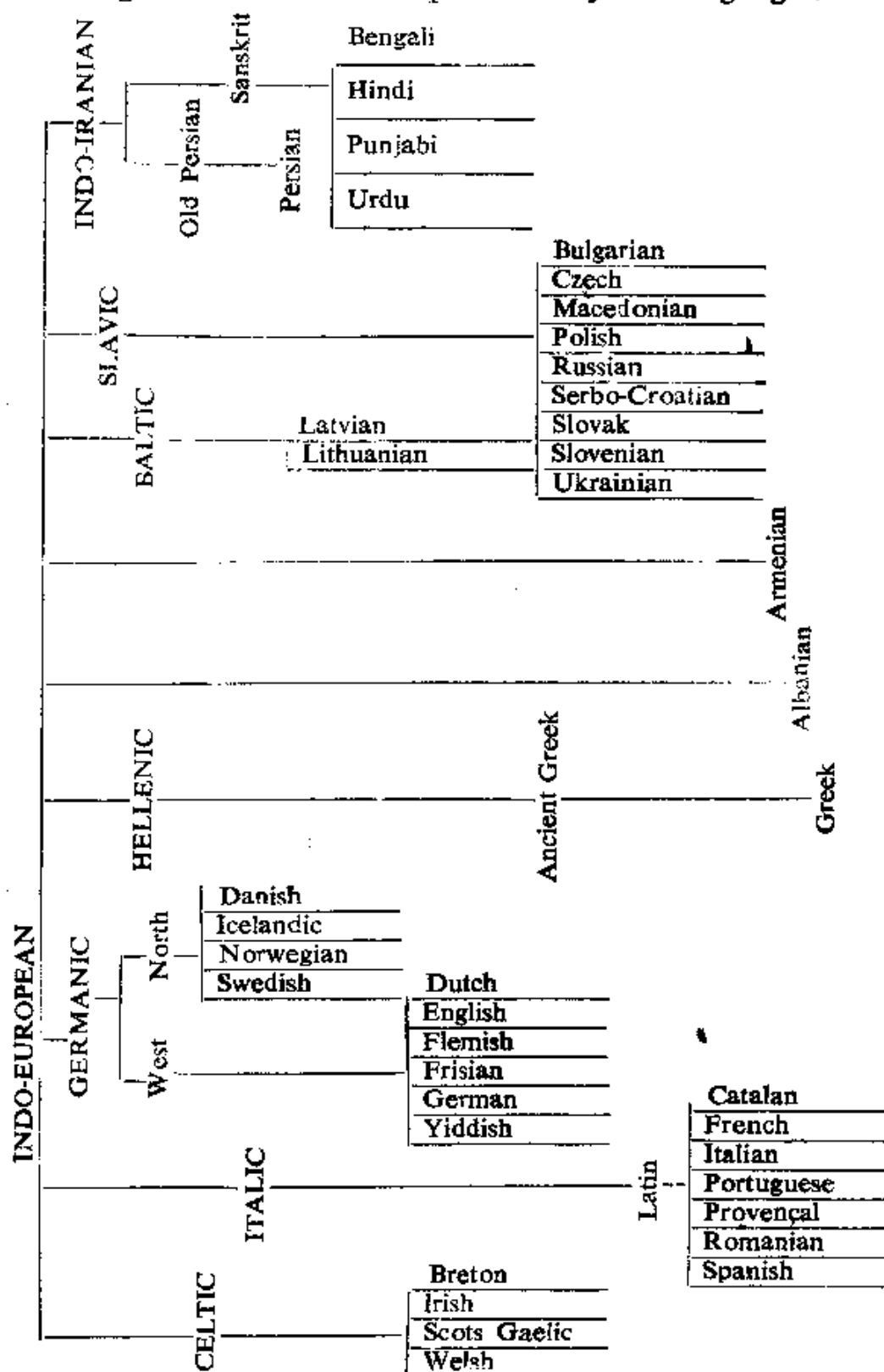
Athabaskan and Algonkian are two North American language families, spoken in parts of Canada and U.S.A.

12.2 Linguistic typology

LINGUISTIC TYPOLOGY, as a branch of both synchronic linguistics and diachronic linguistics, is the typological classification of languages through comparison on the basis of any significant general features of form, structure or meaning shared by a group of languages. Therefore, the linguistic groups based on typological similarity are set up regardless of historical language families, and may in part agree with them or cut across them.

The basic assumption is that as the nature and function of human language set limits on the forms it may take, there must

Fig 3 The Indo-European Family of Languages.



Source: Fromkin and Rodman (1978), 1.344^a

be similarities between languages. For example, each natural language is primarily a spoken medium in human communication. Within these limits, there are also marked differences between them according to what purposes they fulfil, and these differences can be observed at any level of language and linguistic analysis. Languages can be typologically classified according to the similarities they exhibit with other languages at any level or levels.

12.2.1 Phonetic typology

PHONETIC TYPOLOGY means the typological classification of languages on the basis of the shared phonetic features or types of articulation that are essential to their phonological systems. For example, the group of languages like French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish all have front vowels with lip-rounding, symbolised /y/, /ø/, and /œ/ as those in the French words “tu” (*you*) /ty/, “deux” (*two*)/dø/, and “bœuf” (*ox*) /bœf/, but not in other Romance languages, such as Italian, Spanish and Portuguese and in English.

It has been noticed that languages that are geographically close to each other often share common phonetic features whether they are genetically related or not. For example, many Indian languages make use of a series of retroflex consonants, and phonologically distinct from consonants articulated with dental closure or friction, whether they are languages of the I—E family or those of the Dravidian family.

12.2.2 Phonological typology

PHONOLOGICAL TYPOLOGY is the typological classification of languages according to how the sounds and sound fea-

tures of languages are organized into phonological systems. Such classification may be made on a number of different dimensions.

One dimension is the typological classification of languages according to the composition of their phonological systems in terms of distinctive consonants and vowels: their relative number and their interrelations. Take the phonological classification of languages in terms of distinctive consonants for example, consonants can be classified on the basis of the number of articulatory places and manners according to which they are distinguished. Both English and Chinese plosives fall into three-place and two-manner system:

English: bilabial, alveolar, velar and voiced, voiceless.

Chinese: bilabial, alveolar, velar and aspirated, unaspirated.

While the places of articulation are the same for the plosives in both languages, in the English plosives, the features aspirated and unaspirated are insignificant and in the Chinese ones, the features voiced and voiceless are insignificant. However, Ancient Greek had a three-place and four-manner system, that is, bilabial, alveolar, velar and aspirated, unaspirated, voiced, voiceless, which makes both the contrasts between voiced and voiceless, and aspirated and unaspirated significant.

Another dimension is the typological classification of languages into **TONE LANGUAGES** and **NON-TONE LANGUAGES**. In the tone languages like Chinese, tones function to distinguish lexical meaning, while in non-tone languages like French and English, they do not. Within tone languages, distinctions are made between those whose tones may be analysed in terms of different contrasting levels (as several tone languages of Africa), and those may not (as in the Chinese language). Further distinction can be made on the basis of the number of tones used, and to what uses

they are put.

Languages may also be classified according to other phonological dimensions, such as syllabic structures, prosodic features, timing, etc.

12.2.3 Grammatical typology

GRAMMATICAL TYPOLOGY is the typological classification of languages on the basis of the predominant features of their grammatical systems. Such classification may also be made on a number of dimensions.

One dimension mostly discussed is the typological classification of languages according to whether these languages mainly depend on word order and word class membership, or on the morphological categories of concord and government, as the markers of their syntactic relationship and sentence structures. Many of the Chinese languages, Vietnamese and English belong to the former, while Latin and Ancient Greek to the latter. Within the former type, subdivisions can be made according to the types of word order involved. For example, modern Chinese, modern English, French and German favour SVO order while Japanese and Turkish SOV order. Within the latter types, subdivision can be made according to the types of categories involved (case, gender, number ...) and the relative weight placed on each.

12.2.4 Structural typology

The best known division of languages based on word structures into the “isolating” or “analytic”, “agglutinative”, and “fusional” or “inflecting” types was named the STRUCTURAL TYPOLOGY.

ISOLATING LANGUAGES refer to those which depend on invariable roots or stems and word order to indicate their grammatical relations. Vietnamese is a typical isolating language. Chinese can also be classified as an isolating language as many words in it are made of one syllable only. Several Southeast Asian languages also belong to this type. An alternative term of the isolating type is **ANALYTIC**, but it is seen as opposed to synthetic types of language (agglutinative and inflecting), where words contain more than one morpheme.

AGGLUTINATIVE LANGUAGES are those in which words are typically composed of a sequence of affixes added to the root. Turkish is a typical agglutinative language in which a word can be segmented into a root and several affixes, eg, "*evlerinden*" (from their houses) can be segmented into the root "*ev-*" (house) and affixes such as "*-ler*" (plural,) "*-i-*" (possessive), "*-n*" (automatically and regularly inserted according to phonological rules), "*-den*" (ablative). In the above example, each affix carries one grammatical meaning, and the boundary between affixes is clear-cut due to the absence of fusion. Other languages like Japanese and Sudanese are also instances of this type.

Fusional languages are those in which morphemes in a word are fused together. As a result, it is difficult to segment the word into its component morphemes. Latin is typical of fusional languages, e.g., */amo/* (I love), */amat/* (he loves), in which there are no distinct elements for "I", "he" or present tense. Other languages like Ancient Greek and Sanskrit can also be grouped into this type.

However, the threefold division only represent a tendency. No language falls neatly into one or another type.

A fourth class is known as POLYSYNTHETIC or INCORPORATING. Many American Indian languages like Eskimo belong to this type. But, their word structures are really extreme cases of fusional and agglutinative languages. So they are of no significance in linguistic typology.

12.2.5 Semantic typology

SEMANTIC TYPOLOGY refers to the typological classification of languages based on the different semantic features that constitute the semantic systems of different languages. Such classification may be based on two types of meanings: lexical meaning and structural meaning. In this section, we will concentrate on the former.

The speakers of different linguistic communities may have different number of meanings to exchange in the same semantic field because of their different social systems, cultural backgrounds and geographical locations. Therefore, the number of words for composing a certain field will be different from language to language, and even the same words (words with the same denotative meanings) may be different in connotative meanings in different languages. Languages can be classified on this basis.

One often cited example is that a set of words are used for different types and conditions of snow in Eskimo, a language spoken in the northern part of North America, and Lapp, a language spoken in North Europe, whereas English, Chinese, and other languages, to whose speakers snow is not an all-pervasive climatic and topographical feature, make do with merely one word, further specifying its nature with additional words if necessary (e.g., in Chinese “*dàxuě*” (heavy snow), “*zhōngxuě*” (medium snow), and

“xiaoxuě” (light snow).

Another interesting instance, which is very much determined by cultural factors, is the kinship terms. The kinship field is generally built around the lexical differentiation of three fundamental human family relations: filiation, consanguinity and spouseship. In some languages like English, different words are used primarily to distinguish the sex of kin relations (e.g. *“brother”* and *“sister”*, *“aunt”* and *“uncle”* ...), but in other languages like Chinese, distinction is also made lexically between members of kin who are older or younger than the speaker, or his/her parents, who are on the maternal side or on the paternal side, and who are in-laws or not. Thus, for the English *“aunt”*, we have in Chinese *“gū”* (father’s sister), *“shěn”* (wife of father’s younger brother), *“bómǔ”* (wife of father’s elder brother), *“yímǔ”* (mother’s sister), and *“jiùmǔ”* (wife of mother’s brother); for the English *“uncle”*, we have in Chinese *“gūfū”* (husband of father’s sister), *“shū”* (father’s younger brother), *“bó”* (father’s elder brother), *“yífū”* (husband of mother’s sister) and *“jiù”* (mother’s brother).

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

Comparative and historical linguistics

linguistic typology

correspondence

starred form

agglutinative

polysynthetic

family tree

Grimm’s Law

starred letter

isolating

fusional

internal construction

wave theory

2. Find out at least one sound correspondence in each of the series of cognates in the following languages, and determine which two languages are closer in genetic relationship.

MEANING	L1	L2	L3
(a) "two"	/tu:/	/dø/	/due/
(b) "three"	/θri:/	/trwa/	/tre/
(c) "nine"	/nain/	/nœf/	/nove/
(d) "ten"	/ten/	/dis/	/di'eci/
(e) "hundred"	/'hʌndrəd/	/sā/	/'tʃento/
(f) "life"	/'laɪf/	/vi/	/'vita/
(g) "give"	/gɪv/	/doner/	/do'nare/
(h) "summer"	/'sʌmə/	/ete/	/e'state/
(i) "street"	/stri:t/	/ry/	/'strada/
(j) "head"	/hed/	/tʃef/	/'kapo/

3. What are the modern reflexes of each of the following Old English words and explain what changes have taken place in the historical development of English from OE to ME:

(a) bedd	(b) biscop	(c) blōd	(d) cild	(e) fif
(f) fȳr	(g) gōd	(h) hring	(i) oft	(j) writan
(k) twelf	(l) mūs	(m) mȳs	(n) fōt	(o) fēt
(p) gōs	(q) gēs	(r) hefig	(s) wæter	(t) wls

4. Explain what processes the linguist postulates as occurring between the protolanguage and each of the four languages in making the following reconstructions from the material given:

MEANING	La	Lb	Lc	Ld	PROTO-L
(a) "goose"	mon	mo	mond	mont	*mond
(b) "nose"	bet	bet	bet	bet	*bet
(c) "yellow"	rim	ri	rim	rim	*rim

(d) "red"	bon	bo	bon	bon	*bon
(e) "say"	dem	de	dem	dem	*dem
(f) "twig"	bed	bed	bet	bet	*bed

5. The following English words in Column One correspond with their French counterparts in Column Two. Can we draw a conclusion from this evidence that the two languages come from the same parent language? Why? Find out the origin of each pair of corresponding words.

English	French
(a) restaurant	le restaurant
(b) hotel	l'hôtel
(c) grand	grand
(d) machine	la machine
(e) chauffeur	le chauffeur
(f) chandelier	le chandelier
(g) chant	chanter
(h) coupon	le coupon
(i) jazz	le jazz
(j) starter	le starter
(k) football	le football
(l) prince	le prince
(m) court	le court
(n) judge	le juge
(o) soldier	le soldat
(p) crime	le crime
(g) battle	la bataille
(r) danger	le danger
(s) march	la marche
(t) marry	marier

6. Find out the similarities among the languages compared in terms of the phonetic features in the words listed, and classify them on the basis of the phonetic features unique only to some of them:

L1	L2	L3	L4
[pai]	[part]	[dar]	[fɛʔ]
[ʔɛ]	[tard]	[fɛnbir]	[ʔapiʔ]
[tə]	[daip]	[pad]	[pʰatʰ]
[ʔan]	[tiər]	[tad]	[tipʰ]
[tʰa]	[flai]	[tatar]	[ʔet]
[ʔə]	[pai]	[tip]	[fɛʔ]
[pʰin]	[bet]	[bed]	[latʰ]
[ʔɛn]	[bɛər]	[lipar]	[tʰatəʔ]
[li]	[lain]	[fan]	[bɛfən]
[fa]	[fɛər]	[pidər]	[lin]

7. Group the following words under the three headings of “isolating”, “agglutinative” and “fusional” according to the composition of their word structures:

since	went	feet	geese
from	deer	reactionary	countability
us	was	dogs	paintings
unavoidably	fertilizers	sheep	when
seldom	often	rung	phoned

8. Find out the similarities among the languages compared in terms of the following phonological features and determine which two are typologically more similar:

Place Manner	Bilabial	Alveolar	Velar
Plosives	L1: p ^h , p(p, b) L2: p(p ^h , p), b L3: p(p ^h , p), b	t ^h , t (t, d) t (t ^h , t), d t (t ^h , t), d	k ^h , k(k, g) k(k ^h , k), g k(k ^h , k), g
Nasals	L1: L2: m L3: m	n n n	ŋ ŋ

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13. LANGUAGE, THOUGHT AND CULTURE

The question of the relationship between language and thought has haunted the philosophers ever since the time of ancient Greeks and has been a challenge to linguists, psychologists and anthropologists alike. Since culture is the particular system of art, thought, and customs of a society, the heated argument has been further extended to the relationship between language and culture.

13.1 Language as the dress of thought

13.1.1 The monistic view of language and thought

The view that language can be regarded as the dress of thought can be dated back to the time of Plato. It is commonly acknowledged that a speaker's real intention can be known through his own language, to say nothing of his personality. Based on this understanding, thinking is talking to oneself, or is a form of monologue. Without thinking, language would be meaningless; without language, thought would have no form and would not be known to others.

This monistic view was further expounded by Saussure by conceiving language as a system of signs. Each sign, in turn, has two inseparable components like the two sides of the same coin: an image-carrying form, which Saussure (1960) calls the **SIGNIFIER**, and a concept or idea signified by that form, which Saussure terms the **SIGNIFIED**.

In practice, there are a number of proponents in foreign lan-

guage teaching stressing the importance of "thinking in FL", because thought and language are so closely knitted together.

13.1.2 Reaction to the monistic view

Not all people are ready to accept the monistic view. The dualists will have no problem in citing dozens of examples to prove that thought can be independent of language. It often occurs that we tend to make the following statement: "*I don't know how to express my idea with words.*" This reveals the fact that one had the thought before he knows how to say it in words. We also know animals' lack of language does not prevent them from thinking. A dog can tell the difference between his master and a stranger. Its sense of smell gives stimulus to its mechanism of thinking. What is more, the deaf-mute is able to think but could not speak the language of his own community.

Archaeologists have their own say with respect to this matter. Without thought man in the making could never have made a simple hand-axe or flake tool, the earliest of which were found to appear about 1,750,000 years ago. However, there was no marked improvement after that, because man in the making did not possess an effective way to accumulate his experience and knowledge and pass them on from generation to generation. It was only in the last Ice Age, about 100,000 years ago, that there was a break-through in manufacturing more elaborate stone and bone tools in greater and greater diversity. This suggests the emergence of true language. It has also been observed that the speech organs of Java Man and Peking Man could only cope with crying and shouting. They were not complex enough for speech.

Language is only one aspect of semiotics. There are other chan-

nels for communicating our thoughts. We can listen to a piece of music and be fond of its tune and melody, which could well be done without language. The painter, the sculptor, the dancer, the mathematician, the weaver and those who are involved with other forms of creative work have their own way of conceptualizing forms and techniques without the intervening of language.

13.1.3 Language facilitates thinking

In spite of all the above-mentioned counter evidences, one has, to be fair, to admit that once man in the making possessed language, his thinking process was better facilitated. The primitive man was able to deal with abstract ideas such as god, meeting, life, death..., and he was also able to deal with generalization of processes such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division involved in the calculation of figures. With the help of this sort of generalization, one does not have to go over the entire conceptual complex in the process of thinking. Judging from this angle, the conclusion drawn from the archaeological findings serves to illustrate the close relation between thought and language. Without the emergence of language, man in the making would have remained what he was one or two million years ago. He could have only dealt with simple processes of thinking as animals do.

13.2 Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Both assumptions are strongly challenged by the American anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir and later his student Benjamin Lee Whorf. As a matter of fact, the former was influenced by von Humboldt. Their argument is that people do not perceive the world freely but rather they do so through language, a filtering structure

which will distort the reality and thus influence and control their thought. This view is highlighted by Whorf's elaborate examples drawn from an American Indian language called Hopi which is as different in structure from English as it is from any other language, and this view is now commonly referred to as **SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS**.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has two major thrusts: **LINGUISTIC DETERMINISM** (language determines thought) and **LINGUISTIC RELATIVITY** (there is no limit to the structural diversity of languages). In its most extreme version, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis may be summarized as follows:

(1) One's thinking is completely determined by his native language because one cannot but perceive the world in terms of the categories and distinctions encoded in the language.

(2) The categories and distinctions encoded in one language system are unique to that system and incommensurable with those of other systems.

The hypothesis may be typically represented by the following statement. "If Aristotle had spoken Chinese, his logic would have been different."

13.2.1 Linguistic determinism

Whorf presented his evidence mainly from his comparison between the Hopi language and English. In English and most of the European languages, he argues, words are divided into two major categories: nouns and verbs. This distinction of word categories forces us to think that the world is also divided into two major categories: actions and objects. So we even regard something like the shapeless time which is in fact a continuum as an object which can

be cut up and counted. Thus we have 4 days or 10 days. In Hopi, however, words are not divided the same way as in English. It regards time as a continuum, which is shown from the way of their presentation. Instead of saying "4 days", they say "*Dayness the fourth time*" or "*the fourth dayness*". And instead of saying "*Ten days is greater than nine days*", they say "*The tenth day is later than the ninth.*"

Interesting as it is, Sapir-Whorf's linguistic determinism has met with strong opposition. Some people point out that the argument presented by Whorf is circular. If we are to establish a significant correlation between A and B, it is necessary that A and B be separately identifiable. That is, the identification of A should not depend on the identification of B or vice versa. The evidence Whorf can find to support his claim that Hopi's concept of time is different from that of English speaking people is just Hopi's expression of their idea in a different way. And this way of argument makes his claim that conceptual differences are determined by language differences completely trivial and uninteresting. If we can accept this way of argument, we can also claim that the so-called language differences are determined by conceptual differences. What we really need are some non-linguistic criteria, which Whorf failed to supply. But it seems quite difficult to supply such criteria since the best way to find out what a man's concepts are is to observe what he says.

The second criticism to a strong version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis concerns the problem of translation. In his attempt to show that the Hopi do not conceive of time as English speaking people do, Whorf has cited the "day-counting" example time and again. But this conclusion suffers a serious problem of over-literal transla-

tion. If we translate over-literally, we may collect something from the thought of other people that is not really there. For example, there are at least two ways of translating the English word "*breakfast*". One is "*the first meal of the day*" which is an interpretation of the word in terms of its actual referent. And the over-literal way of translating it will result in "*the meal which breaks a period of fasting*". Though this looks much more faithful to the original meaning (in fact faithful to its etymological origin), it is surely misleading. An example from English and French may be even more illuminating. The English people speak of "*King Charles the First*" or of "*Queen Elizabeth the Second*", while the French say "*King Charles One*" or "*Queen Elizabeth Two*" if translated literally. However, few people from both cultures will accept the conclusion that the English people do not think of kings or queens as being separate people as the French do, but believe that there is a single Charles who keeps reappearing at different time in history. An example from Chinese may be close to this argument and most convincing. Even though we do say "*shài tài yáng*" (晒太阳) in Chinese, no one of us will admit that we think that it is people who bathe the sun rather than the sun bathing people. Here, we are not claiming that a semantic translation necessarily reflects the structure of thought, since the semantic translation may have been well contaminated by the way of thinking in the culture of the target language. What we are trying to show is that there do seem to exist some disparities between what people actually think and what is conveyed in the over-literal translation. So this is the second methodological problem we have to solve before we can reach any convincing conclusion in line with linguistic determinism.

13.2.2 Linguistic relativity

Sapir-Whorf's linguistic relativity derives in large measure from Saussure's thesis of the arbitrary nature of the sign. By the arbitrary nature of the sign is meant, in the first place, that a signifier bears no logical or intrinsic relationship to its signified. There is, for example, no logical reason why the animal tiger should be signified by the form "*tiger*" and not some other possible form, as indeed is the case in other languages.

But much more important is the second aspect of the arbitrary nature of the sign, i.e. the signifieds themselves are arbitrary. This point becomes obvious as soon as we come into contact with a foreign language and culture. The Chinese character "*shān*" (山), for example, covers a conceptual area that has to be distinguished as two separate signifieds in English designated by "*mountain*" and "*hill*" respectively. Conversely, we find in English the word "*river*" whose signified is obligatorily split into two in Chinese as either "*jiāng*" (江) or "*hé*" (河).

Where two languages organize experience differently, we might be tempted to ask which organization is the more natural. But the fact is that both are (largely) arbitrary. And this is a fact of human language in general: Not only is a language free to choose its signifiers, it can also make arbitrary selections of signifieds.

The arbitrary nature of signifieds has an important consequence for our view of language. For if signifieds are arbitrary, it clearly follows that they do not have any autonomous existence by virtue of some kind of essence to be found in nature (see Culler, p.24). What, then, is the nature of signifieds? What is it that makes signifieds possible, that brings them into being?

Questions like these led Saussure to formulate one of the most important principles of modern linguistics, which became known as structuralism. Signifieds, so this principle goes, are members of a system and each signified derives its identity from its relations to other members of that system. Thus we cannot know the exact meaning (i.e. the signified) of "*mountain*" unless we contrast it with "*hill*", and we can only pin down the meanings of both signifiers by seeing them as members of a system which also includes other conceptually neighbouring terms such as "*mound*" and "*hillock*". Mountains and hills differ with regard to height and magnitude, but they are not divided by any hard and fast line in nature. Nor is there any logical reason why the conceptual area covered by "*mountain*" and "*hill*" should be cut up at the same point as in English, or why it should be cut up into two divisions instead of some other number, or even why it should be cut up at all (at the primary level of lexicalization). The point is that no matter how this area of experience is conceptualized, the resulting categories will be arbitrary, and they can be grasped only as members of a system, each member being what the other members are not.

What is true of "*mountain*" and "*hill*" is true of language in general. Every language is a unique system of signs, with arbitrarily chosen signifiers as well as arbitrarily chosen signifieds. Signifieds (as opposed to prelinguistic matter) do not exist prior to and independently of signifiers: they bring each other into existence.

If Saussure's theory is right, certain consequences seem to follow concerning the relationship between language and culture. Given that a language is a unique system of signs, it seems possible

to view a culture as a unique system of signifieds. And to the extent that signifieds are brought into existence by systems of signifiers (simultaneously created with the signifieds as the twin components of signs), culture is conditioned and perhaps even shaped by language.

Continuing an influential tradition fostered by such scholars as Von Humboldt and Edward Sapir, Whorf argues that "the background linguistic system is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shaper of ideas". Thus, instead of using language to represent what is already given in nature, we "dissect nature along lines laid down by our own languages". In other words, categories of conceptualization are relative to the conceptualizing medium (i.e. language), and culture is conditioned by language.

Whorf's theory of linguistic relativity has given rise to a great deal of controversy. As far as our present discussion is concerned, two issues are of particular importance. First, to what extent is language a shaper of culture? Secondly, which should be regarded as the first cause, language patterns or cultural norms?

In its most extreme form, the theory of linguistic relativity may be taken to hold that we are not able to make distinctions unless these distinctions are lexicalized. This position is obviously untenable. The fact that Hopi has one word for insect, aeroplane and pilot does not mean that Hopi speakers cannot easily distinguish between these three different objects. In fact, as Whorf (1956) himself points out in connection with this example, "the situation, of course, decides any possible confusions among very disparate members of a broad linguistic class".

This is not to say that language exerts no influence on culture.

The nature of this influence is best captured by the American linguist Charles Hockett, when he says that "languages differ not so much as to what **can** be said in them, but rather as to what it is **relative** . **easy** to say in them". By making it easier to say certain things than others, a language helps to reinforce certain ideas and beliefs, making them salient, pushing them into the foreground of attention.

But why is it that certain ideas are pushed into the foreground of attention while others are kept in the background? And why is it that languages differ in the things they make salient? Whorf does not seem to be very much concerned with such questions. Saussure's theory of arbitrariness is certainly true up to a point. But not all signifieds are arbitrary; and those that are arbitrary are not all entirely arbitrary. For there is in every language a large number of signifieds which are not so much arbitrarily pushed into the foreground of attention as already exist, to a greater or lesser extent, in this condition. In other words, culture also exerts a strong influence on language.

13.3 Language and culture

13.3.1 Cultural and linguistic universals

When we learn a foreign language we do not just notice differences between that foreign language and our mother tongue: we are also often struck, and aided, by numerous features shared by the two languages. This is only to be expected, since human beings, whatever language they happen to speak and wherever they happen to live, have a great deal in common both biologically and culturally. These common biological and cultural features we may

refer to as biological and cultural universals (Lyons, 1977). While it is important to distinguish between biological and cultural universals, they are in many cases, and perhaps in the final analysis in all cases, inseparable, with cultural universals always presupposing certain biological universals.

All men, regardless of birth and culture, share certain perceptual dispositions. Owing to these dispositions, we are more responsive to certain stimuli than others. Where such stimuli are present in all cultures, the coupling of biological universals with cultural (i.e. environmental, material, social, etc.) universals may be expected to lead to linguistic universals.

Colour vocabulary provides interesting examples. (Berlin and Kay, 1969) It is a well-known fact that languages vary greatly in the way they divide up the colour spectrum. This dazzling variety has been frequently cited as evidence of the arbitrary nature of the sign and in support of the theory of linguistic relativity. As it has recently been shown, however, there are systematic factors at work behind this apparent arbitrariness. For example, the distinction of black and white is lexicalized in all languages—a fact which may be accounted for by the sharp contrast in luminosity between these two colours. Next to black and white, those portions of the colour spectrum which we may broadly treat as red and green are almost universally lexicalized, and this linguistic fact has a ready explanation in the biological fact that there are particular cells in the retina that are sensitive to these hues. In both cases, it is important to add the cultural fact that the colours in question are present in the environment of all human communities.

In addition to biological and cultural universals as factors leading to linguistic universals, there are what may be called functional

universals, although it is possible to treat these as forming a subcategory of cultural universals. The structure of a language is shaped to a very significant extent by the functions which it performs in a particular culture and society. While certain widely differing cultures call upon their languages to fulfil divergent functions, there are also certain very basic functions which characterize all languages. Where such functional universals exist, they may be seen as the natural consequence of biological and/or cultural universals, and they in turn lead naturally to linguistic universals. For example, it has been found that all (or almost all) languages distinguish grammatically between declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences. This linguistic universal is clearly motivated by a functional universal, i.e. speakers in all cultures have found it necessary to use language to make descriptions, to ask questions and to give orders.

13.3.2 Cultural and linguistic peculiarities

Just as the combination of biological and cultural/functional universals tends to generate linguistic universals, so differences in one or more of these respects will give languages their unique grammatical and lexical structures. When Whorf (1956) says that "all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated", can we not equally well say that observers often arrive at different pictures of the universe precisely because they are presented, in their customary cultural settings, with different "physical evidence" in the first place?

Whorf cites a number of lexical examples in support of his theory of linguistic relativity. English has three separate words for insect, aeroplane and pilot, but Hopi has only one. Eskimo has a rich

vocabulary for different kinds of snow whereas English has only two. In all such cases, however, the linguistic differences are due to obvious cultural differences. Aeroplane and pilot are represented by distinct signifiers in English simply because they are an important fact of life in the major English-speaking cultures. Likewise, the fact that Eskimo boasts a large number of snow terms has a ready explanation in the important part snow plays in the life of the Eskimos. Examples like these serve to illustrate a simple and familiar principle, i.e. different cultural features — be they environmental, material, or social — produce different linguistic features.

Not only do cultural features vary synchronically from speech community to speech community, they also change diachronically within the same speech community. As fresh needs arise in a culture, its language responds by inventing new words or borrowing words from other languages, or by attaching new meanings to existing words. In English, for example, a sharper awareness of women's need for independence has given currency to such terms as "*chairperson*" and "*spokesperson*", and has helped to make the use of "*their*" in sentences like "*Every one has to do their job properly*" more acceptable, in preference to the malechauvinistic "*his*" and the clumsy "*his or her*".

Sometimes the diachronic process is somewhat more subtle. At the turn of the century in Britain, the word "*typist*" carried the implication of "*male*" unless otherwise indicated, women typists being at that time few and far between. Now, with the majority of typists being women, the situation is just the other way round. By the same token, it may be expected that if and when men and women move increasingly into occupations now more or less exclusive to the other sex, the epithets "*male*" and "*female*" will be dropped from such

customary expressions as "*male secretary*" and "*female executive*".

13.3.3 Language and culture: a dialectical relationship

We are now in a position to see language and culture in a dialectical relationship. Every language is part of a culture. As such, it cannot but serve and reflect cultural needs. This does not necessarily go against Saussure's thesis that the signifieds of a language are arbitrary and hence derive their exact identity from systems of relationships. What needs to be added, however, is that this arbitrariness is not as absolute as he suggested, but is limited by the particular cultural setting from which a language extracts its signifieds. Within the broad limits set by the specific needs of a culture, a language is free to make arbitrary selections of signifieds. This element of arbitrariness is borne out by the fact that there is never at any point in time a **perfect** match between the cultural needs of a speech community and its linguistic resources.

Thus neither linguistic determinism nor cultural determinism can adequately explain why a language should select its unique system of signs, for these selections are made partly in response to cultural needs and partly owing to the inherent (limited) arbitrariness of the process.

There is yet another sense in which language is not a passive reflector of culture. Even assuming that culture is in many cases the first cause in the language-culture relationship, language as the effect in the first link of the causal chain will in turn be the cause in the next link, reinforcing and preserving beliefs and customs and conditioning their future course.

Exercises

1. Explain the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in your own words and give your comments.
2. Do you agree with the view "Language is the dress of thought"?
3. Discuss the influence of language and culture on each other by comparing:
 - (a) the kinship vocabulary in Chinese and English;
 - (b) ways of greeting casual acquaintances in the street in Chinese and English.
4. Describe the changes that have occurred in Chinese terms of personal address since 1949 and discuss the cultural implications of these changes.
5. Discuss the cultural motivations for the following euphemisms in English (the words or expressions in brackets being the non-euphemistic equivalents):
 - (a) frank (obscene)
 - (b) misconduct (adultery)
 - (c) to pass away/to be no more/to leave the world/to breathe one's last (to die)
 - (d) lower income brackets (the poor)
 - (e) maladjusted children (troublesome children)
 - (f) mental disorder (insanity)
 - (g) refuse collectors (dustmen)
 - (h) prison officers (goalers)
 - (i) guest houses (boarding houses)
6. Compile a list of commonly used animal metaphors in Chinese and English, and then discuss their cultural implications.
7. Our word "brown" may cause us to see many varieties of brown as a single color. If we had individual single common words

- for blue-brown, orange-brown, yellow-brown, and black-brown, do you think we would be more aware of these hues?
8. Does a meteorologist see more kinds of clouds than you do?

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14. LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY

14.1 Language as a social activity

It is universally recognized that language is a scientific system on the one hand and a social activity on the other. Though language is actualized through the mind and the mouth of the individual, we should also see the fact that one not only speaks but speaks to others. When one has the need to get in contact with another person, communication is bound to occur, and language is the best tool to facilitate communication. Deprived of communication, society would have never come into existence or would have ceased to exist. Deprived of society, the need for language is also hardly justified. In this sense, language forms the major link between the individual and society. The complexity of these factors leads to the ultimate outcome of language variation in respect of religion, age, sex, status, education, among other things. This provides the theoretical background of sociolinguistics, which includes every aspect of language in relation to social context or interaction. As a description of *ideolects*, *dialects* and *registers* has already been given in Chapter 11, the task of the present chapter is restricted to giving an external description of the interrelationships between language and society. In doing so, one has first to make a contrast between internal authority and external authority over language variation.

14.1.1 Internal authority

INTERNAL AUTHORITY refers to the acquisition of a lan-

guage or dialect by an individual when mixed with fellow speakers of the speech community to which he belongs. Its main features are:

- (1) There are no formulated rules. The learner acquires the language by living together with his family members, playmates or peers.
- (2) The learner's mistakes are not specified. When the language is wrongly used, he will spot it out from addressees through their responses such as surprise, incomprehension or amusement.
- (3) The learner's acquisition of language is inseparable from a geographical or occupational dialect.
- (4) The process of acquisition reflects the overpowering effect of the many on the few.

All these show that the internal authority is informal in nature.

14.1.2 External authority

EXTERNAL AUTHORITY suggests self-conscious effort on the part of the learner as well as of society. Society, through language teachers, institutions, mass media, textbooks and dictionaries impart the knowledge of language to learners at schools or under controlled environments. Foreign language learning is especially an activity under external authority, which obviously is formal in nature.

14.2 Language planning

As there are various languages in a country as well as dialects, society needs a systematic attempt to solve the communication prob-

lem of its people by studying the various languages or dialects it uses and developing a realistic policy concerning the proper selection and appropriate use of these languages and varieties.

This kind of deliberate, official and collective activities is called **LANGUAGE PLANNING**, the linguistic study of which is called **INSTITUTIONAL LINGUISTICS**.

14.2.1 The standard language

When a country abounds with languages and dialects of a particular language, a prestige dialect or a prestige language will be accepted by society as the foundation of the **STANDARD LANGUAGE**. Therefore, the standard language finds its source in a dialect but is more elevated than the dialect concerned. The standard dialect or language is able to cut across areal differences, provide a mutually accepted means of communication and serve as an institutionalised norm for mass-media and language education. However, it is not proper to label linguistic forms or dialects other than the standard form as “sub-standard” or “non-standard”, because the criteria of being “standard” exist only in its social value and have nothing to do with the language system itself.

Most of the major European languages were standardized at the time of the Renaissance. Two academies in Italy, namely, the Florentine Academy (1540) and Academia Della Crusca (1582) were influential in establishing Tuscan as the standard dialect of Italy. Their successes resulted in similar activities carried out by the French Academy in 1630, the Spanish Academy in 1713 and the Swedish Academy in 1786. However, the attempts in England (around 1712) and the United States (1821) were failures, because the speech communities concerned had a distaste for this kind of

official regulation. Dictionaries and grammars came to help in the movement of standardization in the latter two countries, with Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster as the pioneers respectively.

14.2.2 The national language

While the imposition of a dialect as the standard language is executed more in informal ways than through government intervention, it is not the case for the imposition of the NATIONAL LANGUAGE onto a newly-liberated country or a multinational one, which needs greater efforts on the part of the government or public institutions.

National languages can be created or established in several ways.

14.2.2.1 Invention

In the nineteenth century, the Danish language had once been used in Norway when the country was under the rule of Denmark. Shortly after liberation, the up-and-coming Norwegian peasantry decided to create the New Norse by synthesizing Norwegian dialects to replace the language of the foreign rulers.

14.2.2.2 Restoration

Rumanian had originally been a Latin language, but was severely polluted by Turks, Greeks and neighbouring Slavs over the centuries. In the movement of the re-Latinization of Rumanian, it imitated a lot in vocabulary and syntax from French, which also found its origin in Latin.

When Israelis gathered on the land of Palestine from different parts of the world after the Second World War, they felt the

urgent need of the national language to bypass the communication barrier. The task was marvellously performed by restoring Hebrew, which had died out as a spoken language long long ago but was still used in the church in their communities.

14.2.2.3 Imposing a prestige language

When the Phillipines won her independence, there were six languages spoken by at least half a million people each. Since Tagalog possessed about seven million speakers, it was appointed to be taught in all primary and secondary schools in 1940.

The constitution of India had decreed that in 1965 Hindi was to become the national language of India. .

14.2.2.4 Preserving the former ruler's language

In some African countries, European languages are still employed as the national languages. For instance, French are preserved as the official language in Gabon, Guinea, Senegal, Zaire, etc; English is used by countries such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, Zimbabwe, Zambia, to mention only a few.

It should be noted that in some countries where the imposition of the national language had been made, it very often met with strong opposition. Tribal conflicts for instance were by no means rare in India, especially between the Hindi-speakers and the Dravidian-and Bengali - speakers. In South Africa in the first half of 1976, a riot took place over the question of which language was to serve as the medium of instruction in the public schools, which caused 176 deaths and more than one thousand cases of injury.

14.2.2.5 Bilingualism and multilingualism

In some countries where two or three languages are all recognised as standard languages, that is, **COMPOUND BILINGUALISM** is practised, things seem to be much better, though there are still complaints on the part of the speakers of somewhat less prestigious languages.

ex. 14—1

Canada	English, French
Singapore	Chinese, - English, Malay, Tamil
Switzerland	German, French, Italian, Romansch
Belgium	Flemish, French
Rwand	Rwand, French
Somali	English, Italian

In its broad sense, bilingualism refers to the situation in which members of a speech community can speak bilingually with one language being the national language. This gives us the term of **SUBORDINATE BILINGUALISM**. As a result of great influx of migrants from other countries, bilingualism had been witnessed in the United States as a social fact, but bilingual education was forbidden in many states until the Bilingual Education Act was passed in 1968.

14.2.3 The official language

The **OFFICIAL LANGUAGE** is similar to the standard language or the national language, but it is by no means synonymous to the latter. The former is used under formal, official situations (or in mass media) and so distinction lies in its social function. Take several Arabic-speaking countries for example, they use classical Arabic in public affairs but the vernacular Arabic at home, with the

former as the **HIGH LANGUAGE** and the latter the **LOW LANGUAGE**. A situation like this is now often called **DIGLOSSIA** which is a matter of formality in nature. See the distinction of High Language and Low Language in the following countries:

ex. 14—2

Country	Language	High	Low
Arabic			
countries	Arabic	classical	colloquial
Greece	Greek	Katharevousa	Dhimotiki
Switzerland	German	Hochdeutsch	Schweizerdeutsch

14.3 The interrelation between language and society

Generally speaking, a member of a speech community possesses a repertoire of several dialects and registers, the choice of which depends on social functions it has to serve. On the other hand, the social value of a dialect or variety reveals the social status of the speaker. A speaker with a large repertoire is likely to be more successful in his future career than a person without, because he is able to use the language to cope with more complex situations competently and appropriately.

14.3.1 Roles

In a speech situation, everyone is playing a certain **ROLE** consciously or unconsciously, such as the role of father and son, husband and wife, teacher and student. One talks to his boss in a different way from talking to his colleagues. Language is appropriately used when the speaker knows well his own status, the subject matter of his speech, whom he is talking to, when and where communication is being performed.

14.3.2 Reputations

All dialects and registers are regarded as grammatically well-formed by their own speech communities. This suggests that each community has their own sub-grammar. Yet, a particular variety or language sometimes enjoys an established reputation in society. The relative REPUTATION of a variety of speech depends on the social and economic status of professions and regions that use it. If society recognizes the importance of being officials, teachers, doctors or lawyers, their speech would bear high repute. The same is true of those dialects of speech communities inhabiting in economically advanced regions or cities, such as those of Londoners or New Yorkers.

Speakers of varieties with less prestige are often at the bottom of society. Many of them try to eliminate what they regard as the indicators of social or educational inferiority or regionalism. For instance, some parents of the black families in the U.S. can see the importance for their children to speak the standard language, because it promises employment possibilities and upward mobility. The following example shows how an American Black mother urges her boy to learn the standard language.

ex. 14—3

Mother: Give your brother some of these cookies.

Son (9-year-old): I ain't got no mo.

Mother: For goodness sakes, can't you do any better than that?

Son: I don't have any more.

In fact, dialects and registers with less prestige have their own justifiable value. They are indices of intimacy or solidarity. If one wants to mix with or be accepted by a speech community, he

has to learn the less prestigious variety of the community. Otherwise difference in speech will serve as an unbridgeable gap between the speaker and the speech community.

14.3.3 Domain

In the literature of sociolinguistics, DOMAIN refers to a group of institutionalized social situations typically constrained by a common set of behavioural rules. For instance, the domain of the family is the house, that of religion is the church, that of education is the school, that of public service is the office,....

In the analysis of multilingual settings, where several participants are involved, the notion is seen as of great importance because it dominates the individual's choice of his role and of the topic, and it is related to broader sociocultural norm and expectation of interaction.

14.3.4 Communication codes

Bernstein (1972, 1973) reported that children from working-class homes have a language-deficit by comparison with middle-class and upper-class children. The cause of failure lies in that the former's non-standard dialect is functionally more restricted, inexplicit and context-deficient, by comparison with the standard. This prevents them from taking an active part in classroom discussions. Thus, he made a distinction between the RESTRICTED CODE and the ELABORATE CODE. Bernsteins' conclusions were refuted by William Labov, who showed that working-class children were often quite capable of codeswitching to the "elaborate code" when they felt it necessary.

14.3.5 Code-switching

A speaker does not necessarily have to follow a particular variety or dialect all the time in the course of communication. He may change from the standard language to the non-standard language, he may shift his subject matter which dominates the incidence of vocabulary, he may move from one point on the formality scale to another point. This linguistic behaviour is referred to as **CODI-SWITCHING**. The example given in section 14.3.2 can also serve as a case of code-switching where the boy shifts from non-standard English to standard English, except that he did it deliberately following his mother's urge.

14.3.6 Language maintenance

In a subordinate bilingual situation, when the young generation of a subordinate language community do not feel the need of using that language or deliberately avoid the use of that language for fear of social prejudice, the subordinate language will fall into disuse or die out in the course of time. For this reason efforts are sometimes made to keep a language from going out. This is called **LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE**. The years after World War II have seen the reappraisal of official language policy in many countries, where the state apparatus tries to maintain some of their minority languages, both indigenous and foreign.

14.4 The role of dictionaries and grammars as a social force.

14.4.1 Dictionaries

Society very often exerts its influence in the standardization of language through the publication of dictionaries. On the one hand

a dictionary is comprehensive in giving information about the language. There are 600,000 entries contained in Webster's Third International Dictionary. On the other hand, it is authoritative on language use, with the participation of distinguished scholars and specialists in various fields, and sometimes, with the approval and encouragement of the government.

The standard dictionary usually provides five items of information, namely, spelling, pronunciation, part of speech, derivation and meaning. The order of items of information, that is, which comes first, has always been a matter of discussion.

Spelling being of the first order reflects the old tradition of taking the written word as primary and basic and meets no doubt with criticisms from those who hold modern views of language. Although the stress of pronunciation is advantageous for the child and for the learner of a language, there are difficulties when too many words are encountered for the first time by language users who simply do not know how to say them properly. Compared with pronunciation, spelling has been more standardized.

As most of the items of information are external factors, the relative importance of meaning is ignored. Not only it comes last, but also there is hardly more than one example for illustration.

14.4.2 Grammars

The compilation of grammars by renowned scholars have also played a very important role in standardizing the use of language.

There are some overlappings in content between dictionary and grammar. For instance, both deal with word classes and categories. Thus, a concise dictionary presupposes a comprehensive grammar, whereas a concise grammar presupposes a comprehensive dictionary.

The way to compile the grammar of a specific language can be prescriptive or descriptive depending on the views held by the grammarians. A prescriptive grammar aims at standardizing and preserving the conventional use of language, but tends to be conservative, stereotyped and reprimanding. A descriptive grammar tries to describe objectively all the varieties but tends to be trivial and burdensome. It has to be simplified for pedagogical purposes.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms

internal authority	role
external authority	domain
language planning	restricted code
institutional	code-switching
linguistics	language maintenance
prestige language	prescriptive grammar
bilingualism	
2. What is the difference between standard language, national language and official language?
3. Comment on the merits and weaknesses of prescriptive grammar and descriptive grammar.
4. How do you react to a person who says, "I don't got none"? What is the basis of your reaction?
5. What is the social status of persons who, when asked, "Who is it?" answer, "It is I"? What would you answer? Is "It is I" taught as the "correct" response?
6. Why is incorrect orthography being constantly criticized in our country?

With the help of Webster's Third New International Dictionary, do the following as instructed:

7. Study the section on pronunciation in the "Explanatory Notes", which starts on page 16a of that dictionary. If someone wanted to find out how a word, say "wharf", is pronounced by cultured people across the country, he or she would do well to look in this dictionary. It lists eight pronunciations in abbreviated form. Write them out in full.

8. What exactly does the fact that a pronunciation is unmarked signify?

9. The dictionary sometimes marks a pronunciation as coming from a particular region. Write down the regional pronunciation for the following words and name the regions.
 - (a) greasy _____
 - (b) Negro _____
 - (c) the _____
10. Some (of the) words have pronunciations that are labelled "substandard" or "chiefly substandard". Look in the "Explanatory Notes" for the label "substandard" and summarize what is meant by the term.

11. Look up the following words and write down the substandard pronunciations and their full labels.
 - (a) because _____

- (b) ask _____
- (c) athlete _____
12. (a) Look up the phrase "greasy grind." How does the dictionary label it?
- _____
- (b) Can a word that has the label "slang" ever be appropriately used in contexts that are not marked by extreme informality?
- _____
- (c) Give the meanings of the words and phrases below that are labelled "slang".
- i) mary _____
- ii) up for grabs _____
- iii) cornball _____
13. (a) Look up the word "like" as used in "He talked stuttering-like". How is this word labelled? _____
- (b) Look up the following words and give the meanings that are labelled "substandard" and the exact wording of the label.
- i) learn (meaning "teach") _____
- ii) wore out _____
- iii) suspicion _____
14. Write down the labels for the following underlined inflected forms in the uses illustrated.
- (a) bring (preterite) _____
- (b) have wore _____
- (c) you was (plural) _____
- (d) you is (plural) _____
- (e) John and her are here _____

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15. PRAGMATICS

15.1 Introduction

What is pragmatics? PRAGMATICS can be defined as the study of language in use and linguistic communication. Why do we need pragmatics since we have grammatical analysis? And do the two branches of study differ? This idea is that after we have done grammatical analysis of a sentence, there is still something unsaid about it — there is still some aspect of meaning uncovered by our analysis. For example, the grammatical analysis of “He went to town yesterday” does not tell us who he is, which town or when is yesterday. In other words, there are still things undetermined. We know that this sentence has been used by many people on many occasions for many purposes; it has meant many different things and performed many different functions. Depending on the context, “*he*” can be anybody, any male — someone’s brother or father, Churchill, Stalin, or Roosevelt. “*Town*” can refer to any place big enough to be called town — London, Moscow, or Washington. What about “*yesterday*”? It can refer to any day in the past — August 22, 1778, November 6, 1976, or even May 1, 500 B. C. It is also the case that the sentence must have performed many functions. It is, first of all, a statement of information. It can be a defence for the person designated by “*he*” if he had been accused of wrong doing committed “*yesterday*” in a place far away from the place called “*town*”. It can be also a warning if the hearer has committed some crime in town and “*he*” is an inspector, mean-

ing to say "Be careful. You may be found out!". From this brief discussion, we can see that the context of situation in which a sentence is used contributes a lot to its meaning, meaning that can not be accounted for in pure grammatical analysis. In this sense, pragmatics can be defined by this formula: $\text{PRAGMATICS} = \text{MEANING} - \text{SEMANTICS}$. That is, pragmatics takes care of the aspect of meaning that is not accounted for by semantics.

We can make clearer the difference between grammatical analysis and pragmatics by comparing them along the following dimensions. The former studies sentences as units of the abstract linguistic system while the latter studies utterances as instances of the system. The former stops at the sentence level; the latter looks at bigger chunks of conversation. The former regards sentences as stable products; the latter treats utterances as dynamic processes. The former analyses sentences in isolation; the latter analyses utterances in close connection with their contexts of situation. There are now various theories in pragmatics. We shall discuss some of the most important ones in this chapter.

15.2 Context and meaning

The notion of context is particularly important in pragmatics because it contributes a lot to the meaning of an utterance. In a sense pragmatics studies how contextual features determine or influence the interpretation of utterances. For example, there will be several possible interpretations to the utterance "*John is like a fish*" in isolation. But if it is said when John is swimming, it probably means "*John swims well*". If it is said at a party, it will be taken to mean "*John can drink a lot of wine*". On other occasion it can mean "*John is as cold as fish*". In any case it is justified

to say that contextual factors intervene in semantic interpretation.

Moreover, every language in the world has DEICTICS, which identify objects, persons and events in terms of their relations to the speaker in space and time. Much of the meaning of deictic terms depends on the specific context of situation in which they are used. In English deictics may be grouped into three categories. The first group is person deictics which are used to identify participants in the discourse. “*I*” and “*we*” are to refer to the speaker and “*you*” the hearer. The third person pronouns are used to refer to people other than participants. The second group is place deictics such as “*here*” and “*this*” to indicate the spatial relations between the speaker and the referred object or place. Some verbs also denote the spatial relations between the speaker, the hearer and the place designated, such as “*come/go*” and “*bring/take*”. The third group is time deictics used to indicate time relations such as “*now*” and “*then*”, “*yesterday*”, “*last month*”, “*next year*”. The characteristics of these terms are that their thorough interpretation is subject to their specific context. It is impossible to specify the time for “*then*” or “*now*” unless we know the exact time when the utterance is made.

15.3 Speech act theory

SPEECH ACT THEORY is proposed by J. Austin (1962) and J. Searle (1969). Basically they believe that language is not only used to inform or to describe things, it is often used to “do things”, to perform acts. Typical utterances are: “*I hereby name this ship Red Flag*”, “*I bet you five yuan it will snow tomorrow*”, “*I promise to be here at nine o'clock*”, “*I apologize*”. In these cases, the uttering of the relevant words is the leading event, without

which the action specified cannot be done. These are called performative sentences and the verbs used performative verbs. Of course other conditions must obtain for the successful performance of the action. For instance, the person who names the ship must be in the proper position to do so, and the naming must be done according to certain procedure with the right participants.

It is found that even non-performative sentences are used to perform acts, as shown by the example we discussed in 15.1. So it is claimed that all sentences, in addition to meaning whatever they mean, perform specific actions or "doing things" through having specific forces. Austin suggests three basic senses in which in saying something one is doing something, and three kinds of acts are performed simultaneously:

- (1) LOCUTIONARY ACT: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference;
- (2) ILLOCUTIONARY ACT: the making of a statement, offer, promise, etc. in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it;
- (3) PERLOCUTIONARY ACT: the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance.

Suppose the speaker says "*It's cold in here*". Its locutionary act is the saying of it with its literal meaning "it's cold in here." Its illocutionary act can be a request of the hearer to shut the window. Its perlocutionary act can be the hearer's shutting the window or his refusal to comply with the request. The locution of an utterance is actually its literal meaning. The illocution of an utterance is the speaker's communicative intention or the function it is intend-

ed to perform. The perlocution of an utterance can be as the same as the illocution when it is recognized and satisfied, or very different from it when it is not recognized or when it is ignored. For example, when the illocution is an invitation, the perlocution can either be an acceptance or a refusal, depending on social and personal factors.

15.3.1 Illocutionary acts

What speech act theory is most concerned with is the illocutionary acts. It attempts to account for the ways by which speakers can mean more than what they say. It is also designed to show coherence in seemingly incoherent conversations. Consider:

ex. 15—1

H: That's the phone. (1)

W: I'm in the bathroom. (2)

H: Okay. (3)

This is a little conversation between husband and wife when the telephone rings. In (1) the husband is not describing something — it is a thing that needs no description to his wife. In saying (1), he is making a request of his wife to go and answer the phone. In (2), the wife is not describing her action either — people do not usually describe what they do in the bathroom. Its illocutionary acts are (1) a refusal to comply with the request and (2) issuing a request of her husband to answer the phone instead. In (3), the man accepts the wife's refusal and accepts her request, meaning "All right, I'll answer it". This analysis shows that this seemingly unconnected conversation is very coherent on a speech-act level, and that in saying things people are in fact "doing" things.

15.3.2 Types of illocutionary acts

What kinds of illocutionary acts can be performed? Obviously, we cannot just list all the performative verbs as all the possible types of illocutionary acts. For one thing, that would be too long a list to be useful as a linguistic generalization. Secondly, there are certain verbs which can describe illocutionary acts but cannot be used as performative verbs. For example, we can describe an act as an "insult", but we cannot say "*I hereby insult you*". Thirdly, many sentences have an illocutionary force without using performative verbs (as in "*It's cold in here*"). Searle suggests five basic categories of illocutionary acts as follows:

ASSERTIVES: sentences that commit the speaker to the truth of something. Typical cases are "*I think the film is moving*" and "*I'm certain that he had got it*". The degree of commitment varies from statement to statement. The commitment is small in "*I guess he had got it*" but very strong in "*I solemnly swear that he had got it*".

DIRECTIVES: sentences by which the speaker tries to get the hearer to do something. "*I beg you to give me some advice*" and "*I order you to leave right now*" are both attempts to get something done by the hearer. Among the verbs that can denote this group are "*ask*", "*request*", "*plead*", "*entreat*", "*command*", "*advise*", etc.

COMMISSIVES: sentences that commit the speaker to some future action. Promises and offers are characteristic of this group. Interestingly, warning is also a commissive, as "*If you do that again I'll beat you to death*", because it also commits the speaker to doing something.

EXPRESSIVES: sentences that express the speaker's psycho-

logical state about something. Verbs typically used for this category are “*thank*”, “*congratulate*”, “*apologize*”, “*welcome*”, “*deplore*” and so on.

DECLARATIONS: sentences that bring about immediate change in the existing state of affairs. As soon as an employer says to an employee “*You are fired*”, the employee loses his job. Verbs often used for declarations are “*name*”, “*christen*”, “*nominate*”, “*point*”, “*declare*”, etc.

15.3.3 Indirect speech acts

One group of sentences which speech act theory is concerned with are those sentences that perform one illocutionary act indirectly by performing another, that is, **INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS**. “*Can you pass the salt, please?*” is both a question about the hearer’s ability to pass the salt and a request of him to pass the salt. The problem here is how it is possible for the speaker to say one thing and mean something else, and how it is possible for the hearer to understand the indirect speech act. It is suggested that in cases like this much is relied on the shared background information and the general powers of rationality and inference on the power of the hearer. For example,

ex. 15—2

X: Let’s go to the movies tonight.

Y: I have to study for an exam.

In order to work out that Y’s utterance is a refusal, X has to go through a process of inference like this. “I have made a proposal to Y and a relevant response must be one of acceptance or rejection or further discussion. But his reply was none of these, so his illocution must be different from the literal meaning. I know that

studying for an exam takes a lot of time and going to movies also takes a lot of time. He probably cannot do both in one evening. Probably his primary illocutionary act is to reject my proposal." In practice, no one would consciously go through this process; but this is supposed to be the way indirect speech acts work.

Requests are often performed indirectly. Their indirectness has certain characteristics that tend to group sentences of request into the following types:

Group 1: Sentences concerning the hearer's ability to do something:

ex. 15—3

Can you reach the book over there?

Could you be a little more quiet?

Group 2: Sentences concerning the speaker's wish or want that the hearer will do something:

ex. 15—4

I would like you to write this down.

I would appreciate if you could do that for me.

I'd rather you didn't do that any more.

I'd be very much obliged if you would take me there.

Group 3: Sentences concerning the hearer's doing something:

ex. 15—5

Would you kindly get off my foot?

Won't you stop making that noise?

Group 4: Sentences concerning the hearer's desire or willingness to do something.

ex. 15—6

Do you want to type this letter for me now?

Would it be convenient for you to come over on Friday afternoon?

Would it be too much trouble for you to take these books back?

Group 5: Sentences concerning reasons for doing something:

ex. 15—7

You should write to them every now and then.

Must you make that noise whenever you are reading?

You'd better book the tickets two weeks in advance.

Sometimes we have sentences that have more than one of these elements, with one inside another: "*Would it be too much trouble if I suggested that you could possibly make a little less noise?*"

15.3.4 Difficulties in speech act theory

Often an utterance does not perform just one act, but two or three acts, and it is not always easy to decide what act or acts an utterance performs. When a mother says to a child "*Is that your coat on the floor?*", it can be a question about the ownership of the coat, but it is often used to issue a request (to pick it up) and a criticism (for leaving things everywhere). Sometimes two unrelated acts are performed by one utterance and it is left to the hearer to choose. For example,

ex. 15—8

A: They say it's the cleverest students who fail in their exams.

B: You should be O.K. then.

B's remark is both a reassurance and a desire to make a joke. There are also cases when one utterance performs two different acts

for different hearers. For instance,

ex. 15—9

(S is talking to H1 on the telephone and H2 is a group of people making a lot of noise in the room)

S: Sorry, there's a lot of noise at this end.

in which S apologizes to H1 (who accepts the apology) and reprimands H2 (who apologize and stop making noise). On other occasions, the speaker seems to have a chain of motives in a single utterance (H's remark in ex. 15—10) and the hearer has to decide how to respond:

ex. 15—10

Husband: It's getting late, dear.

Wife: (a) It's only 11:30, darling.

(b) But I'm having such fun.

(c) Do you want to go?

(d) Aren't you enjoying yourself?

15.4 Conversational analysis

There is a group of sociologists who record conversations and analyse their reoccurring patterns. Their approach is different from other scholars' in that they have a lot of naturally occurring data for their analysis and they do not suggest many generalizations. We discuss some of their findings.

15.4.1 Adjacency pairs

ADJACENCY PAIRS refer to the fact that one type of utterance is typically followed by a special type of utterance, such as question-answer, greeting-greeting, offer-acceptance, apology-minimization. They are adjacent, produced by different speakers and are ordered

as the first part and second part. However, sometimes they are not adjacent, but separated by another adjacency pair. For example,

ex. 15-11

A: May I have a bottle of whisky?

B: Are you twenty-one?

A: No.

B: No.

in which the answer to the first question is suspended until a certain condition is satisfied. In principle, the number of embedded pairs can be infinite, but the limit of human memory does not allow that. Three or four inserted pairs are common:

ex. 15-12

(Q1) A: Are you going to the film tonight?

(Q2) B: What is it?

(A2) A: *Lentn in October.*

(Q3) B: Where is it shown?

(A3) A: The school cinema.

(Q4) B: What time?

(A4) A: Seven-thrity.

(A1) B: All right. Let's go.

15.4.2 Preferred second parts

Another problem of the adjacency pair is the range of potential second parts. For example, there are many responses to questions which are not answers but which count as SECOND PARTS. In the following, a question can be followed by a question (in a), by a partial answer (in b), by a statement of ignorance (in c), by a denial of the relevance of the question (in d) or by a denial of its presupposition (in e):

ex. 15—13

A: What does Joe do for a living?

B: (a) Do you need to know?

(b) Oh, this and that.

(c) I've no idea.

(d) What's that got to do with it?

(e) He doesn't.

On the basis of this observation it is suggested that there can be several second parts to first parts of adjacency pairs; but they are not of equal status. Some are preferred and some dispreferred. The preferred second parts are more usual, more normal and less specific. B's reply in 14a is preferred and dispreferred in 14b:

ex. 15—14

(a) A: Have you got a light?

B: Yes.

(b) A: Have you got a light?

B: No, sorry. I don't smoke.

It has been found that dispreferred second parts have much in common. They contain more material than preferred second parts; They often have elements of delay (such as "*well*", "*let me see*", "*Hehh, Un...*"), elements of apology (e.g. "*Sorry*" in 14b), and when relevant an element of appreciation and an element of explanation as in ex. 15—15:

ex. 15—15

A: Could you come to our party tonight?

B: Hehh, well, thanks for the invitation, but I'm afraid I can't make it this time. You see I'm having a party in my house myself....

15.4.3 Presequences

A PRESEQUENCE refers to the kind of sequences that are used to prefigure some specific potential actions. The following is a pre-invitation:

ex. 15—16

A: What are you doing tonight?

B: Nothing important. Why?

A: Come to my place for dinner, then.

Here the pre-invitation is treated as transparent by B who suspects by “*why*” that something is forthcoming. The following example is a pre-request:

ex. 15—17

A: Are you going out tomorrow?

B: No, not really.

A: Are you using your bike then?

B: No. Do you want to borrow it?

A: Yes, if you're not using it.

We can see that a presequence generally has the following four turns:

Turn 1: a question checking if some precondition exists for the action to be performed in Turn 3.

Turn 2: an answer indicating that the precondition exists (or does not exist as the case may be).

Turn 3: the actual action, if the precondition exists; otherwise withholding it.

Turn 4: response to the action in Turn 3.

We also have what may be called pre-announcements, which often give the speaker a chance for a longer turn of talk. Consider ex. 15—18:

ex. 15

(a) A: Did you listen to the news last night?

B: No, Anything important?

A: Well, an earthquake was reported in...

(b) A: I forgot to tell what Liu told me today.

B: What was it?

A: Dick and Jane are divorced.

The structure of pre-announcements looks like this:

Turn 1: checking on newsworthiness of the potential announcement in Turn 3.

Turn 2: Confirming the newsworthiness; request to tell.

Turn 3: the announcement delivered.

Turn 4: news received.

As we can see, presequences are very much like indirect speech acts.

But presequence analysis looks more closely at the structure side of the phenomenon.

15.5 The Cooperative Principle (CP)

15.5.1 The Cooperative Principle and its Maxims

Now we know that quite often the speaker can mean a lot more than what is said. The problem is then to explain how the speaker can manage to convey more than what is said and how the hearer can arrive at the speaker's meaning. P. Grice believes that there must be some mechanisms governing the production and comprehension of these utterances. He suggests that there is a set of assumptions guiding the conduct of conversation. This is what he calls the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE. He formulates the Principle and its maxims as follows:

Make your contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

(1) The maxim of Quality

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:

- (a) do not say what you believe to be false
- (b) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

(2) The Maxim of Quantity

- (a) make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purpose of the exchange
- (b) do not make your contribution more informative than is required

(3) The Maxim of Relevance

Make your contribution relevant

(4) The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous, and specifically:

- (a) avoid obscurity
- (b) avoid ambiguity
- (c) be brief
- (d) be orderly

15.5.2 Conversational implicatures

Grice is aware that speakers do not always follow these maxims: in fact they often violate them. But that is not the point. The important thing is that whether the speaker follows or violates these maxims, he produces some IMPLICATURE — a kind of extra meaning that is not contained in the utterance. For example, according to the Maxim of Quality, if I say “*I have three children*”, the implicature is that “*I have only three, not more*”. According to the Maxim

of Quantity, if I say "*The flag is white*" it has the implicature that "*The flag is only white; not red, blue and white*", otherwise I should have said so. Inferences also arise from the assumption that the Maxim of Manner is being observed. For example, events are often told in the order of their occurrence. Thus "*Li hit Wang and Wang hit Li*" would be interpreted differently from "*Wang hit Li and Li hit Wang*".

When any of the Maxims is blatantly violated that the hearer knows that it is being violated, then CONVERSATIONAL IMPLICATURES arise. For instance, the utterance "*He is made of iron*" is literally false -- no man is made of iron. But the hearer still assumes that its speaker is cooperative and knows that he is trying to say something distinct from the literal meaning. He can then work out that probably the speaker meant to say that "He has some properties similar to those of iron". If someone is asked of his opinion of the lecturer on linguistics and the reply is "*He is a good cook*", it may be regarded as a violation of the Maxim of Relevance. The hearer still assumes that if the speaker is cooperative his reply must be relevant in a different sense — the lecturer is no good. If more (or less) information is given than required by the conversation, some implicature is also generated. Suppose a young man introducing himself to a girl at a party says "*I'm Robert Sampson from Leeds, 28, unmarried*", the girl would immediately suspect that he has some motive behind. For the introduction is more informative than necessary for the occasion. Some remarks are literally informationless: "*War is war*", "*Girls are girls*". But on the assumption the speaker of these utterances is cooperative, the hearer can still derive much information from them.

15.5.3 Licensing violations of the maxims

The regulative force of the Maxims is so strong that when the speaker is aware that he might violate one of them he uses certain remarks to indicate the possible violation. These remarks are like licenses for him to violate any of the Maxims. They are also cues for the hearer so that he can qualify his interpretation. The use of these remarks shows how strongly the Cooperative Principle is at work in conversation.

When one is aware that there is the danger of his violating the Maxim of Quality, he usually qualifies his statements by "*I don't know how exactly it happened, but...*". When he does not have adequate evidence for what he is going to say he makes it clear that it is second-hand information by "*I was told...*", "*I hear...*" or "*They say...*". Little hedges like "*It seems*", "*I guess*" and "*a sort of*" also have the function of qualifying the truth value of what is to follow.

When one cannot be informative enough he can attribute the inability to some outside force, saying "*Well, I'm not at liberty to tell*" or "*That is classified information*". When one has more information to tell than required, he also uses some licensing remarks as if to make his violation of the Maxim of Quantity legal. He can say, for example, "*I know this is long and involved, but it is really important*". When one has failed to observe the Quantity Maxim, he can still repair the failure by saying "*I am awfully sorry, I really have been rambling on...*".

When one has something to say but knows the topic is not quite relevant to the conversation, he may use some strategies to move the conversation in different directions without appearing to be irrelevant. He may say "*I meant to ask the other day...*" or "*That*

reminds me something that...". Other strategies include "*Getting back to what we were talking about earlier...*" or "*Before I was cut short, I was about to say...*"

When one is conscious of some violation of the Maxim of Manner, he can stop in the middle of his speech and say "*Wait, let me simplify that*". When he needs to buy time in his presentation, he typically uses "*Just a second*", "*Hang on*", "*I'm trying to think*".

All these remarks to license maxim violation show that the Cooperative Principle has some psychological reality; if it is not a valid principle, there should be no need to provide licensing for the violation of it.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

linguistic context

situational context

pragmatics

performative

locutionary act

illocutionary act

perlocutionary act

conversational implicature

adjacency pair

2. Do you know what a **fleep** is? Not yet, but you soon will as you meet the word in a series of contexts that will narrow the meaning step by step and make it specific. The contexts are in this short paragraph:

I have a fleep with me nearly every day. This fleep goes with

me everywhere, and I consider it an indispensable part of my life. In appearance it offers an attractive contrast: one part is bright and shiny, the other quietly dull. My fleep outlasts the other parts of my wardrobe, and I can often wear it for several years. Being unobtrusive, it seldom goes out of style. Some people like a stretchy fleep but I prefer the traditional kind. The leather of my fleep is soft and supple so that it gives with every movement of a part of my body. This fleep is very important to my well-being, for without it my trousers would come down. So every morning I buckle it around my waist and step forth to meet the world with a feeling of confidence.

3. One can test a sentence to see if it is a performance sentence by inserting **hereby** and seeing whether it sounds "right". Using such a test, determine which of the following sentences are performance sentences.
 - (a) I testify that she saw the accident.
 - (b) I know that she saw the accident.
 - (c) I suppose the Yankees will win.
 - (d) He bet her \$2500 that Carter would win.
 - (e) I dismiss the class.
 - (f) I teach the class.
 - (g) We promise to leave early.
 - (h) I owe the I.R.S. \$1,000,000.
 - (i) I bequeath \$1,000,000 to the I.R.S.
 - (j) I swore I didn't do it.
 - (k) I swear I didn't do it.
4. Read the following dialogue and explain why Mr B felt cheated.

A: I saw Mr X having dinner with a woman yesterday.
B: Really? Does his wife know about it?

A: Of course she does. She was the woman he was having dinner with.

5. Can you think of a situation in which B's utterance in the following is relevant?

A: I do think Mrs Jenkins is an old windbag, don't you?

B: Huh, lovely weather for March, isn't it?

6. Analyse the following in terms of adjacency pairs.

1 A: 买张去南城的火车票

2 B: 白天的还是晚上的

3 A: 白天的是几点?

4 B: 要直快还是特快?

5 A: 特快多少钱?

6 B: 三十五元。

7 A: 几点?

8 B: 十点半

9 A: 那就要白天的特快吧。

10 B: 好啦。

7. Determine which of the following are preferred second parts and explain why.

1) A: Could I have a copy of **Pragmatics** by Levinson, please?

B: Sorry, it's out at the moment. Could you come back Thursday morning, please?

2) A: Can I use your car this weekend?

B: Yes, of course.

3) A: Did you leave the lights on last night when you left the reading-room?

B: No, I wasn't there.

4) A: If you'd care to come and visit a little while this morn-

ing, I'll give you a cup of coffee.

B: Well, that's awfully sweet of you. But I don't think I can make it this morning. I'm running an ad in the paper and I have to stay near the phone.

8. The following conversation seems quite bizarre in isolation. Can you imagine a situation in which it will seem acceptable and natural?

A: I have a fourteen-year old son.

B: Well, that's all right.

A: I also have a dog.

B: Oh, I'm sorry.

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16. LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE

16.1 The function of linguistics in the study of literature

Linguistics and literary criticism have been held as two separate disciplines of study. Earlier in this century, even though the school of "New Criticism" attached great importance to the close reading of the literary text, they, as well as other people who were engaged in the study of literary style, lacked a systematic knowledge of linguistics and took a sceptical attitude towards the function of linguistics in the study of literature.

Along with the rise of sociolinguistics in the early 1960s and the introduction of speech act theory and text linguistics, the study of literary style witnessed rapid development. A number of linguists and literary critics have moved from the two extremes to a merge of the two disciplines, with the linguists taking literary language as their subject of investigation and the critics adopting a linguistic approach. This area of mediation between the two disciplines of linguistics and literary criticism is now known as **LINGUISTIC STYLISTICS** or **NEW STYLISTICS**.

H.G. Widdowson defined stylistics like this: "By 'stylistics' I mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation" (1975). There are two key issues here. One is to treat literature as discourse and the other is to adopt a linguistic approach. By treating literature as discourse and seeking the relationship between linguistic code and literary meaning, the language learner can be more conscious of the interpretative procedures involved and it

helps him develop an appreciation of literature and sharpen his awareness of the communicative value carried by the linguistic code.

The interpretative procedures involved in literary discourse are not different from those for non-literary discourse. If there is a difference, it lies in the fact that with literary discourse the readers are more aware of these procedures. According to H.G. Widdowson, the essential difference between literary and other uses of language is that "in literature the message is text-contained, and presupposes no wider context so that everything necessary for its interpretation is to be found within the message itself. All other uses of language on the other hand find some place in the general social matrix; they develop from antecedent events and presuppose consequent events; they are contextualized in a social continuity" (1974).

The understanding of literature cannot be entirely separated from intuition. Nevertheless, a linguistic description and analysis can be of great help in our understanding. By analysing the language syntactically, semantically and phonologically to seek the possible and probable communicative value, the reader's initial understanding of a piece of literature is tested, modified and greatly enriched and his analytical linguistic tools sharpened in the process. This is the twofold benefit of such an approach. Our satisfaction in reading literature lies not so much in finding what is expressed as in discovering how it is expressed. Therefore, this is the area in which a linguistic approach has an important role to play.

In other words, "stylistics takes the language as primary and artistic values are regarded as incidental to linguistic description"

(Widdowson, 1974). It is believed that linguistic description and analysis can lead to a better understanding of the communicative value of the text.

16.2 A method of linguistic analysis

All stylistic features are linguistic, but not all linguistic features are stylistically important. In terms of transformational-generative grammar, it is the optional transformational rules that contribute to style (Ohmann, 1964). According to structuralists, authors constantly make choices (either consciously or subconsciously) from a paradigm at each point along the syntagmatic axis. (Jakobson, 1960). And systemic-functionalists make it clear that it is the functional choice out of various systems of meaning potentials which leads to the generation of a TEXT. These choices constitute the author's style. "Every analysis of style ... is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language" (Leech & Short, 1981). Since all writers and all texts have their individual qualities, there is no infallible technique for selecting what is significant. Nevertheless, it is of help if we start by examining a text against a checklist of features.

16.2.1 Phonological features

Phonological features cover both sound patterns and prosody. The former consists of alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme and others; and the latter meter, stress, pause, syllable length, enjambement and caesura. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to deal with all the details. What is to be stressed here is the interpretation of these phonological devices.

(1) Onomatopoeic effect

Onomatopoeic effect is achieved by using words which imitate the sounds made by an object (animate or inanimate), or which are associated with or suggestive of some action or movement. As a result of this, the description turns out to be more realistic and vivid, as exemplified in ex. 16-1 and ex. 16-2.

ex. 16-1

My souls, how the wind did scream along! And every second or two there'd come a glare that lit up the white-caps for a half a mile around, and you'd see the islands looking dusty through the rain, and the trees thrashing around in the wind; then comes a hwhack — bum! bum! bumble-umble-umbum-bum-bum — and the thunder would go rumbling and grumbling away, and quit — and then rip comes another flash and another sockdolager.

— Mark Twain

ex. 16-2

Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours

— Keats

In ex. 16-1, those sounds in the underlined words imitate lightning and peals of thunder. The consonance of /st/ and /z/ in ex. 16-2 are felt to imitate the sound of apples being squeezed in the cider-press. Furthermore, the effect thus produced is not restricted to the sound itself, but the activity as a whole. For instance, in the second example, we are not only attracted by the sound of squashing; but also on the general idea of squashing in the slow application of pressure to pulpy, crushable matter. This wider and more abstract interpretation is called **EMPATHY** and **SYNAESTHESIA**.

(2) Chiming

Through sound patterns, two words in a line can be brought closer to make the reader feel their possible connections. In ex. 16-3, the alliteration of "*foul and fair*" shows that the two words act in accordance and implies that "fair is foul and foul is fair."

ex. 16-3

So foul and fair a day I have not seen

— Shakespeare

(3) Expectation and surprise

The effects of expectation and surprise are achieved through a particular rhyme scheme. By following the established rhyme scheme, the hearer/ reader "expects" a recurrence of sounds. And when it turns out to be what was unexpected, the hearer/ reader will enjoy the magic of "surprise". In ex. 16-4, one can see the common noun "*States*" is matched unexpectedly by a proper noun "*Yeats*".

ex. 16-4

My girl Kate's teaching in the States,
Lecturing from town to town.
Pays her bills by, gets her thrills by
Studying the influence of Yeats on Yeats.

— Adrian Mitchell

16.2.2 Lexical features

Lexical features as a matter of fact, are what is called "diction" in literary criticism. They mainly cover (1) the totality of lexical choices; (2) patterns of lexical choices; (3) the evaluation of lexical choices.

By studying the lexical features, we can locate the style of a particular period. Ex. 16-5 shows that in the sixteenth-century

English, a good deal of free movement was permitted between word-classes, such as "*fleshed*" and "*O*".

ex. 16-5

- (a) Come, brother John, full bravely hast thou fleshed
Thy maiden sword.

— Shakespeare

- (b) Why should you fall into so deep an O?

— Shakespeare

Diction can also be a marker of genres. For instance, poets are coiners of new compounds. In Keat's *Ode to a Nightingale*, coinages such as "*Lethe-wards*", "*light-winged*", "*deep-delved*", "*purple-stained*", "*spectre-thin*", "*leaden-eyed*" are frequently found.

A writer or a poet has his own preference of diction. Contrary to Johnson's nostalgia of Latinity, Wordsworth devoted himself to adopting the very language of men. In ex. 16-6 all the words are easy for a child to understand.

ex. 16-6

By night and day
The Things which I have seen I now can see no more
The rainbow comes and goes
And lovely is the rose

— Wordsworth

16.2.3 Grammatical features

Grammatical features cover a much wider area in terms of seriation, apposition, modification, clause types, sentence complexity and so forth. We have to examine here whether any general type of grammatical construction is used to special effect.

This can be illustrated by different forms of seriation. For instance, a series of three-items has the effect of being reasonable, persuasive and representative (ex. 16-7) and a longer series emphasizes particularity and counters universality (ex. 16-8).

ex. 16-7

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed,
and some few to be chewed and digested.

— Bacon

ex. 16-8

A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
Who in the course of one revolving moon
Was lawyer, statesman, fiddler, and buffon.

— Dryden

In the meantime, the arrangement of items in ascending and descending order often leads to climax (ex. 16-7) and bathos (ex. 16-8)

So far as complexity is concerned, ex. 16-9 is representative of Joseph Heller's syntactic technique.

ex. 16-9

It was a night of surprises for Appleby, who was as large as Yossarian and as strong and who swung at Yossarian as hard as he could with a punch that flooded Chief White Halfoat with such joyous excitement that he turned and busted Colonel Moodus in the nose with a punch that filled General Dreedle with such mellow gratification that he had Colonel Cathcart throw the chaplain out of the officer's club and ordered Chief White Halfoat moved into Doc Daneeka's tent, where he could be kept under a doctor's care twentyfour hours a day and be kept in good enough physical condition

to bust Colonel Moodus in the nose again whenever General Dreedle wanted him to.

— Joseph Heller

In this sentence, we can find something rather perverse about its structure, because so many elements which deserve to be in the foreground are subordinated. Here, Heller attempts to express a chain of bizarre relationships between characters by way of perverse structures. This is in conformity with the eccentric design of the novel, in which characters and events are linked through apparently irrational peculiarities of behaviour.

16.2.4 Semantic features

Semantic features are similar to the category of trope in traditional rhetoric, in which an expression is used in a sense other than its proper or literal one. Semantic features can be categorized into four kinds.

(1) Redundancy. In ordinary communication, semantic redundancy is regarded as a fault of style and has been disapproved by generations of rhetoricians and language teachers. However, it has various stylistic effects in literary work.

Ex. 16-10 is a case of humorous use when the speaker paraphrased by all means the same notion “die” to attack a peasant.

ex. 16-10

... abandon the society of this female; or, clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death!

— Shakespeare

In all, semantic redundancy can fulfil the purposes of (i)

metrical convenience; (ii) elegant variation; (iii) thematic elaboration.

(2) Absurdity. Semantic absurdity results from a combination of contradictory or incongruous words but is nothing unobservable in reality. In ex. 16-11, Milton's oxymoron "*a living death*" suggests the blind, Samson Agonistes is in a condition which seems like death.

ex. 16-11

To live a life half-dead, a living death

— Milton

In ex. 16-12 the paradox runs contrary to received opinion of expectation because it introduces a statement conflicting with received opinion or belief. Nevertheless, it still contains a basis of truth.

ex. 16—12

Cowards die many times before their deaths.

— Shakespeare

(3) Figurative meaning. Figurative meaning is the transference of meaning through sense association. By making an imaginative comparison in ex. 16—13, George Eliot made the suggestion of overwhelming conceit in the man.

ex. 16—13

He was like a cock who thought the sun had
risen to hear him crow.

— George Eliot

By substituting the name of one thing for that of another, Shirley managed to use the expression "*Sceptre and Crown*" to mean "*kings and queens*" and "*Scythe and Spade*" to mean "*peasants and labourers*".

ex. 16—14

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down.
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked Scythe and Spade.

— J. Shirley

4) *Honest deception.* Honest deception refers to the deliberate use of overstatement and understatement so as to achieve emphasis. For instance, hyperbole can intensify the character's feeling or emotion (ex. 16—15), elevate a text to heroic or mythical status (ex. 16—16) and sometimes realize humour or ridicule (ex. 16—17)

ex. 16—15

Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.

— Alexander Pope

ex. 16—16

Paul was cutting down trees near Whistling River one day. Suddenly the river rose on its hind legs and squirted 4519 gallons of water straight into the middle of Paul's whiskers. Paul let out an angry yell. People heard him for a thousand miles. "I'm going to make some changes in it. I'll get rid of its curves."...

He put on his old cap, and he called Babe. Paul and the ox started north. They covered six miles at each step. About noon they reached the North Pole.

— Gladys G. Doty and Janet Ross

ex. 16—17

... You could shave with the razor-sharp crease in his trousers.

— David Parks

On the contrary, a conscious understatement uses a negative construction to foreground an intended positive emphasis. In the following example, the expression "*not right fat*" means "*he was quite thin*"

ex. 16—18

As lean was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat,
I undertake.

— Chaucer

When irony is involved, it implies simulated ignorance, and also the simulated adoption of another's point of view for the purpose of ridicule and sarcasm. Therefore the meaning is the direct opposite of what is actually said.

ex. 16—19

We are lucky. It's the other side on the thirteenth of December. That makes us feel real good.

— David Parks

In ex. 16—19, 13 is an unlucky number to most westerners, and therefore the soldiers are definitely not lucky. And since the soldiers were sent to fight in the Vietnam War, they don't feel good at all, as they were all quite frightened at the prospect.

16.2.5 Graphological features

Language is meaningful and uses conventional signs, which can be either sound or written symbols. Although written sym-

bols are secondary in the course of language development, it can make its contribution to auditory perception. The capitalized word "LOT" in the following example suggests the word was stressed when spoken.

ex. 16--20

"Oh come on then, all the LOT of you", cried Uncle Jim.

— H.G. Wells

When going to its extreme as in ex. 16--21, all the initial letters are capitalized. This implies the speaker was so arrogant that he thought the listener could not understand his speech and he had to stress every word uttered.

ex. 16--21

"How Do You Like London?"

— C. Dickens

The fact that graphology encodes meaning in visual symbols can be substantiated by the invention of sight poetry, which depends more on design, the pattern of black and white, than on auditory patterning. Let us first read the following poem.

ex. 16--22

she loves me
she loves me not
she loves
she loves me
she
she loves
she

— Emmett Williams

Emmett Williams' poem is one you must see to understand, for you cannot hear it. There are two base lines of the poem

and they are diminished by one word alternatively. This means the lover was gradually rejected and his mistress eventually preferred to remain single as shown by the single word "*she*" in the last line. If you start at the bottom for this very word and read the last word of the even lines diagonally upward to the right, you can find again the theme "*she loves me not*".

16.3 The Theory of Foregrounding

FOREGROUNDING was first put forward by Russian formalists and the Prague School linguists. It was borrowed from painting, contrasted with background, automation and convention. Foregrounding is meant for what is unusual, attractive, and unconventional. In literature, foregrounding is often achieved through unconventional expressions which attract the readers' attention.

The main manifestations of foregrounding are deviation and parallelism. A systematic study of foregrounding is patterning.

16.3.1. Deviation

DEVIATION is departure from the norm, which is itself relative and hard to define. We can talk about the norm of a historical period, the norm of a writer, or even the norm manifested in a text. But a creative writer can sometimes go outside the conventions of a language for special effects. Such deviations are called external deviations because the norm is determined outside the text. E.E. Cummings' "*he sang his didn't he danced his did*", and Dylan Thomas' "*broke the grape's joy*" and "*the cat was merry*" are typical examples of this kind. The norm can also be set up within the text itself. Deviations from such kind of norm are called internal deviations. Cummings' not using capital letters

has become his own norm. His rare use of capitalization constitutes an internal deviation. Deviation is found at different levels of the language. We can have deviations at the phonological, graphological, syntactic, lexical, and semantic levels, and even deviations in the use of dialects, registers and historical variations.

For foregrounding through deviation, we can make an analysis to discover in what respects the deviation is manifested, how it is different from the norm, how these differences constitute a world which is different from the one we are used to, what its characteristics are, for what reasons the writer has temporarily created such a world, and what he wants to convey. Let us take E. E. Cummings' two lines as an example:

ex. 16—23

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

— e. e. cummings

Here both "you" and "me" take an indefinite article "a" before them, thus forming a syntactic deviation. Semantically, neither "you" nor "me" can be lost by ourselves. Nor is "ourselves" something that can be found. However, in the world in the poem, both are possible. Here the indefinite article "a" means "*a certain*". Since in our world what is lost cannot be the self, we are driven to take the expression metaphorically. The same can be said about "ourselves". Thus this is taken as a figurative expression of the idea that what people lose and find (in the poem, the different experiences and emotions of different people in the same situation) is determined by the inner qualities of each individual.

16.3.2 Parallelism

The other major form of foregrounding is through PARALLELISM, which is over-regularity in language use. The creative writer may restrict himself in language choice, which shows parallelism or repetition. “*To err is human, to forgive divine*” is a good example of this.

For foregrounding through parallelism, we try to look for both the similarities and dissimilarities in it. Now let us look at an example taken from *The Merchant of Venice*:

ex. 16—24

If you prick us, do we not bleed?
if you tickle us, do we not laugh?
if you poison us, do we not die?
and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

— Shakespeare

Here we can see clearly the parallel structure which leads to foregrounding. Each of the four lines consists of a conditional clause followed by an independent clause. From the first line we can draw the conclusion that the independent clause expresses the consequence produced by the condition. We find similar relations between the conditional and the independent clauses in the following two lines. Finally we can discover both similarities and dissimilarities in the fourth line. The cause-effect relationship is there, but the modal auxiliary “*shall*” has broken the pattern set up by the three previous lines, and thus attracted much emphasis to itself. “*Revenge*” is now both a logical consequence from the wrong-doing and a strong determination.

16.3.3 Patterning

Foregrounded features are not isolated from each other. It is generally accepted that they are organized into patterns in order to convey meaning. The creative writer does not attract the readers' attention to the language itself without purpose. On the contrary, foregrounded features are well motivated. In evaluating the semantic and stylistic functions of foregrounding, two distinct yet interrelated procedures need to be taken. The first is to compare each foregrounded feature with the norm and see how the creative writer has temporarily created a world which is different from ours. The second is to find out the cohesion among the foregrounded features, which seldom occur in isolation. What is of first importance here is to discover the pattern into which the foregrounded features are organized. It is this pattern that gives us the clue to a better understanding of a literary work.

The following example will be used to illustrate how the systematicness and consistency in the foregrounded features can be revealing and the discovery of a pattern between them important.

ex. 16—25

THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

Blood punches through every vein,
As lightning strips the windowpane.
Under its flashing whip, a white
Village leaps to light.
On tubs of thunder, fists of rain
Slog it out of sight again
Blood punches the heart with fright

As rain belts the village night.

— Jarvis Kirkup

In this poem, instead of the usual, expressions of blinding thunder, flashes of lightning and showers of rain, we meet collocations like "*blood punches*", "*lightning strips*", "*bowpane*", "*lightning's flashing whip*", "*village leaps*", "*tubs under*", "*fists of rain slog*", "*rain belts the village night*".... We know from the language code that "*punch*" is mainly a transitive verb denoting an aggressive action of a human being. The first line of the poem does not meet these requirements. From analysis of this kind we come to realize that many lexical items in the poem, such as "*strip*", "*whip*", "*fist*", "*slog*" and "*belt*", which are normally associated with human violent actions with the motivation to punish, are now associated with the natural forces of thunder and lightning. We can also observe the dehumanization of the human and the humanization or even super-humanization of the violent forces of nature. This becomes a very important clue towards a better understanding of the poem.

Of course the appreciation of the poem involves many other things. However, it is obvious that the discovery of the pattern in the foregrounded features plays an important part. We can start with a point that has sharply attracted the reader's attention. As we go deep into the description and analysis of such points and discover the relations between them, the pattern thus found is the key to the text.

16.4 Stylistic Variants

One of the ways to examine the stylistic value of a piece of language is to compare it with the stylistic variants. That is to

say, to compare what is actually written by an author with what might have been written. In considering variant realizations of the same message, we can point out what seems to be the stylistic value of the original and give reasons why none of the variants were quite so satisfactory as the original. The typical questions to be asked here is: How would the meaning have changed if the author had written it another way? Now let us take Ezra Pound's "*In a Station of the Metro*" as an example. This *hokku*-like poem has only two lines:

ex. 16—26

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

— Ezra Pound

We may ask the following questions:

- 1) Pound might have written "An apparition of..." in line 1. How does his actual choice of the definite article affect the meaning of this line and thus of the whole text?
- 2) Similarly, he could have written "The apparition of the faces of the crowd". How does his own line differ in meaning from this one and why is the difference an important one?
- 3) What difference would it have made to his meaning if Pound had written "The apparition of those faces in the crowd"?
- 4) What important elements of meaning would have been lost if Pound had written "The appearance of..."?
- 5) How would the meaning of the poem have been altered if, instead of petals, Pound had used any of the following nouns as the first word of line 2: flowers, blooms, blossoms?

- 6) Because of his presumably deliberate choice of the word petals, Pound's poem is open to two rather different interpretations. Can you say why?

Such questions are important because only by considering the unrealized possibilities, can we better define the nature of a writer's achievement. However, when we try to look at the stylistic variants, we have to restrict ourselves to those purely in terms of the language and not to go too far and tamper with the text itself. It is only natural that we cannot examine each and every sentence of a novel in this way, but the fact that we can ask such questions itself is important. We can come to understand how a writer's achievement is built up from the small effects. Moreover, in our efforts we have to select parts that we consider to be most relevant for our scrutiny.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms.

stylistics

synaesthesia

trope

foregrounding

deviation

parallelism

patterning

2. Robert Burns begins a well-known poem with two open similes:

My love is like a red, red rose

That's newly sprung in June:

My love is like the melodie

That's sweetly played in tune.

Does *love* refer to his beloved or to the feeling in his heart? Jot down all the points of likeness for each simile and bring them to class for discussion. What do these many points of likeness suggest to you about the role of the reader in interpreting figurative language?

3. The two following passages by Milton deal with movement. The first describes Satan's struggle as he makes his difficult way through a turbulent chaos. The second describes a dance of nature. In what parts of these lines do the sounds themselves seem to reinforce the sense?
 - a. So he with difficulty and labour hard,
Moved on, with difficulty and labour he.
 - b. The sounds and seas with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move,
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves:
4. Use the theory of stylistic variants to point out the significance of the author's linguistic choices in the following poem:

The Farms of Home

The farms of home lie lost in even,
I see far off the steeple stand:
West and away from here to heaven
Still is the land.
There if I go no girl will greet me,
No comrade hollo from the hill,
No dog run down the yard to meet me:

The land is still.
 The land is still by farm and steeple,
 And still for me the land may stay:
 There I was friends with perished people,
 And there lie they.

A.E. Housman

5. Identify types of linguistic deviation in the following. Discuss how they contribute to the total significance of the poem.

pity this busy monster, manunkind,
 not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
 your victim (death and life safely beyond)
 plays with the bigness or his littleness
 —electrons deify one razorblade
 into a mountainrange; lenses extend
 unwish through curving wherewhen till unwish
 returns on its unself.

A world of made
 is not a world of born — pity poor flesh
 and tress, poor stars and stones, but never this
 fine specimen or hypermagical
 ultraomnipotence. We doctors know
 a hopeless case if — listen: there's a hell
 or a good universe next door; let's go
 — e.e. cummings

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APPENDIX I

LINGUISTICS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE^① TEACHING

I.1 The relation of linguistics to foreign language teaching

Both linguistics and language teaching take language as their subject. Since linguistics is defined as the scientific study of language, it seems obvious that such a study would have direct relations to language teaching. However, linguistics and language teaching differ in their attitudes towards language, their goals, and their methods.

Language is viewed as a system of forms in linguistics, but it is regarded as a set of skills in the field of language teaching. Linguistic research is concerned with the establishment of theories which explain the phenomena of language, whereas language teaching aims at the learner's mastery of language.

① Sometimes a distinction is made between "foreign language" and "second language". A foreign language is learned as educational courses but is not used as a medium of instruction in education, nor as a language of communication. A second language, on the other hand, is widely used as a medium of communication alongside the native language. Thus English is a foreign language in China, but a second language in Singapore. In this book, the terms "foreign language" and "second language" are used interchangeably, referring to a nonnative language. Another term "target language" refers to the language which a person is learning.

To bridge the gap between the theories of linguistics and the practice of foreign language teaching, **APPLIED LINGUISTICS**^① serves as a mediating area which interprets the results of linguistic theories and makes them relevant to the language teacher.

Applied linguistics is conducive to foreign language teaching in two major aspects:

Firstly, applied linguistics extends theoretical linguistics in the direction of language learning and teaching, so that the teacher is enabled to make better decisions on the goal and content of the teaching. When faced with the task of designing a syllabus, the teacher has a number of choices. Should he set out to teach the language used in literary works, or that in daily communication? Should he teach the general system of the language, or a part of this system? What are the principles of compiling or choosing textbooks? What kind of exercises are most suitable? To answer these questions, the teacher is consciously or unconsciously using his understanding of the nature of language learning. Applied linguistics provides the teacher with a formal knowledge of the nature of language and language system, and thus increases his understanding of the nature of language learning. As a result, the teacher can make more informed decisions on what approach to take, hence what to teach.

① "Applied linguistics" also has a broader meaning: the study of linguistics and other theories in relation to any language-related problem. Here applied linguistics looks to psychology, neuro-physiology, information theory, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, etc. as well as linguistics. The problems it attempts to solve include speech pathology, machine translation, national language planning policy, various facets of communication research, and many others.

Secondly, applied linguistics states the insights and implications that linguistic theories have on the language teaching methodology. Once the goal and content of the teaching are settled, the teacher has to consider questions of how to teach. Should the teaching-learning process be teacher-centred, textbook-centred, or learner-centred? How should the learner's errors be treated? What techniques should be adopted in the classroom? Since applied linguistics defines the nature of language learning in connection with various linguistic theories, it helps the teacher to choose teaching methods and techniques.

1.2 Various linguistic views and their significance in language learning and teaching

1.2.1 Traditional grammars

A TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR is a pre-20th century language description which is based on earlier grammars of Latin or Greek. As a product of the prelinguistic era, it lays emphasis on correctness, literary excellence, the use of Latin models, and the priority of the written language.

In language teaching, textbooks based on traditional grammars take prominent writers of the previous centuries as language models. They favour the past "purest" language form rather than the present "degenerated" form; they prefer the written language to spoken language; they concentrate on detailed points instead of the construction of the whole sentence. Under traditional language teaching, students learn to know many taboos. For example, in English one cannot use "split infinitives" or end sentences with prepositions, because these are not allowed in Latin. The traditional

approach to language teaching involves the presentation of numerous definitions, rules and explanations, and it adopts a teacher-centred grammar-translation method, i.e. the main teaching and learning activities are translation and grammar study. In the view of many modern linguists, such an approach is damaging to language learning. They argue that one should teach the language, not teach about the language. In communication, one should learn first to "speak" the language, not to "read" the language.

1.2.2 Structuralist linguistics

Structuralist linguistics describes linguistic features in terms of structures and systems. Dissatisfied with traditional grammars, structuralist grammar sets out to describe the current spoken language which people use in communication. For the first time, structuralist grammar provides description of phonological systems which aids the systematic teaching of pronunciation. However, like traditional grammars, the focus of structuralist grammar is still on the grammatical structures of a language. Structuralist teaching materials are arranged on a basis of grammatical patterns and structures, and ordered in a way supposed to be suitable for teaching. Structuralist linguists are influenced by the behaviouristic view that one learns a language by building up habits on the basis of stimulus-response chains. In teaching method this implies a pattern drill technique which aims at the learner's automatisms for language forms.

1.2.3 Transformational-Generative linguistics

Proposed by Chomsky, Transformation-Generative grammar (or TG grammar) sees language as a system of innate rules. In Chomsky's view, a native speaker possesses a kind of linguistic

competence. The child is born with knowledge of some linguistic universal. While acquiring his mother tongue, he compares his innate language system with that of his native language and modifies his grammar. Therefore, language learning is not a matter of habit formation, but an activity of building and testing hypothesis. As for the construct of a sentence, TG grammar describes it as composed of a deep structure, a surface structure and some transformational rules.

Although Chomsky does not intend to make his model a representation of performance, that is, the way language is actually used in communication, some applied linguists find that TG grammar offers useful ideas for language teaching. In designing teaching materials, for example, sentence patterns with the same deep structure can be closely related, such as the active and the passive. Transformational rules may assist the teacher in the teaching of complex sentence construction. In the teaching of literature, TG grammar provides a new instrument for style analysis. For instance, a writer's style can be identified according to certain kinds of transformation which frequently appear in his writing (Ohmann, 1964). Nevertheless, despite the various attempts to apply TG grammar to language teaching, the influence of such a formal and abstract grammar remains limited in the field of language education.

1.2.4 Functional linguistics

Taking a semantic-sociolinguistic approach, Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics sees language as an instrument used to perform various functions in social interaction. Halliday writes a number of works in which he examines the development of language functions in the child and the functions language has in society.

For Halliday, learning language is learning to mean. In order to be able to mean, one has to master a set of language functions which have direct relation to sentence forms. In the child language, there are seven initial forms. In the adult language, however, these discrete functions are replaced by three **MACROFUNCTIONS**: the interpersonal function, the ideational function, and the textual function.

Since systemic-functional linguistics concerns not only with the formal system of language, but also the functions of language in society, its scope is broader than that of former linguistic theories. In the field of language teaching, it leads to the development of notion/function-based syllabuses, which have attracted increasing attention. In the section of "syllabus design," we will discuss this kind of syllabus in detail.

1.2.5 The theory of communicative competence

The concept **COMPETENCE** originally comes from Chomsky. It refers to the grammatical knowledge of the ideal language user and has nothing to do with the actual use of language in concrete situations. This concept of linguistic competence has been criticized for being too narrow and representing a "Garden of Eden view". To expand the concept of competence, D.H. Hymes (1971) proposes **COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE**, which has four components: **POSSIBILITY** — the ability to produce grammatical sentences; **FEASIBILITY** -- the ability to produce sentences which can be decoded by the human brain; **APPROPRIATENESS** — the ability to use correct forms of language in a specific socio-cultural context; **PERFORMANCE** — the fact that the utterance is completed.

In Hymes' view, the learner acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. The aim of language learning is the ability to perform a repertoire of speech acts so as to take part in speech events. This is another way of saying learning language is learning to perform certain functions. Like Halliday's functional grammar, Hymes' theory also leads to notion/function-based syllabuses, and a step further, communicative syllabuses.

The theory of communicative competence stresses the context in which an utterance occurs. In its application, the teacher may teach how in different situations the same sentence can perform the function of statement, command, or request. On the other hand, while introducing different linguistic forms with the same semantic structure, for example the two forms of "you" in Chinese, he may draw special attention to different contexts in which they are used. The conceptual approach also leads to a concentration on discourse, in Hymes' term linguistic routines — the sequential organization beyond sentences. Thus in the teaching of literature, the teacher can focus on features of different genres. In the teaching of conversation, he can introduce such strategies as opening, continuing, turn-taking and closing. To present teaching contents of this kind, a learner-centred teaching methodology is necessary.

1.3. Syllabus design

1.3.1 What is syllabus?

SYLLABUS is the planning of a course of instruction. It is a description of the course content, teaching procedures and

learning experiences. The concept “syllabus” is often used interchangeably with “curriculum”, but CURRICULUM is also used in a broader sense, referring to all the learning goals, objectives, contents, processes, resources and means of evaluation planned for students both in and out of the school.

I.3.2 Major factors in syllabus design

I.3.2.1 Selecting participants

Before the training program starts, it is necessary to specify the characteristics of the learner and select individuals who match those specifications. For example, college beginners in China are expected to have acquired the knowledge of English specified in the *Syllabus for Higher School English*. In order to select qualified students, an entrance examination is held every year. Apart from the learner's previous knowledge, his attitude to language learning and his past experience may also be taken into consideration. Likewise, teachers should be selected according to specified standards.

I.3.2.2 Process

When deciding what to be taught to the selected students, the teacher has to consider several questions: the learner's present mastery of the language; what he will be using the language for; the gap between the learner's present state and the future requirement, and the way to bridge the gap. All this being clear, the teacher can come to the actual design of the syllabus, which includes the arrangement of content, preparation of materials, selection of teaching methodology and techniques, and means of course evaluation.

1.3.2.3 Evaluation

At the end of the training programme, it is necessary to find out whether and to what degree the learners have reached the teaching objectives. There are two different kinds of evaluation: INTERNAL EVALUATION which checks whether and to what degree the programme has taught what it meant to teach; EXTERNAL EVALUATION which tries to find out whether and to what degree the programme is useful to the learners in their work. The two kinds of evaluation provide feedback to the whole training programme.

1.3.3 Types of syllabus

1.3.3.1 Structural syllabus

Influenced by structuralist linguistics, the STRUCTURAL SYLLABUS is a grammar oriented syllabus based on a selection of language items and structures. The vocabulary and grammatical rules included in the teaching materials are carefully ordered according to factors such as frequency, complexity and usefulness. The linguistic units in a sentence may appear in slots:

ex. 1-1

My friend	sent	me	a birthday card	last week.
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This pattern is probably followed by a group of substitutional words, also put into slots:

ex. 1-2

My sister	bought	him	a new hat	yesterday.
John	gave	her	a bundle of flowers	that evening.
The mother	lent	the little girl	a dictionary	on Sunday.

Thus by substituting new elements in one or other of the slots, learners practise the same sentence pattern repeatedly until they can produce it automatically. They are expected to accumulate pieces of vocabulary and grammatical rules, combine them into natural sentences, and thus acquire some linguistic perfection.

The structural syllabus has been used for many years, and still dominates some language programmes, including most of the foreign language courses in China. However, people have become more and more aware of its shortcomings. The major drawback of such a syllabus is that it concentrates only on the grammatical forms and the meaning of individual words, whereas the meaning of the whole sentence is thought to be self-evident, whatever its context may be. Students are not taught how to use these sentences appropriately in real situations. As a result, students trained by a structural syllabus often prove to be communicatively incompetent.

1.3.3.2 Situational syllabus

The **SITUATIONAL SYLLABUS** does not have a strong linguistic basis, yet it can be assumed that the situationalists accept the view that language is used for communication. The aim of the situational syllabus is specifying the situations in which the target language is used. The selection and organization of language items are based on situations. Grammatical forms and sentence patterns are introduced and practised, but they are knitted in dialogues entitled "*At the Airport*", "*At the Supermarket*", "*At the Bank*", and so on. In class an **AURAL-ORAL TEACHING METHOD** is adopted, i.e., new materials are heard and spoken before they are read and written by the learners. This method may still be teacher-centred, but compared with the grammar-translation method

there is more participation on the learner's part. The teacher can make use of pictures, real objects, and the postures of the participants to involve students in dialogues and roleplaying.

The situational syllabus has certain advantages over the structural syllabus, for it sets out to meet the learner's direct communicative needs. However, since the situational syllabus relies on whatever linguistic description is available, and at its time this meant structuralist grammar, such a syllabus is essentially grammatical. Some people regard it as "pseudofunctional". The situations described in a textbook cannot be truly "authentic". Moreover, the arrangement of the situations is not systematic.

1.3.3.3 Notional-functional syllabus

1.3.3.3.1 General characteristics

First proposed by D. Wilkins and J.A. van Ek, the NOTIONAL—FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUS has received considerable attention since the 70s. Compared to the situational syllabus, the notional-functional syllabus has a much stronger theoretical basis—it is directly influenced by Halliday's functional grammar and Hymes' theory of communicative competence. The concept of NOTION refers to the meaning one wants to convey, while that of FUNCTION refers to what one can do with the language. For example, while saying "*Would you please tell me how to get to the library?*" the speaker expresses the notion of inquiry and performs the function of asking the way. The notional-functional syllabus is initially concerned with what the learner communicates through the language — not with what the grammatical structure is, or when or where he uses the language. It is proposed that

one should analyze the needs of the learner to express meanings before deciding the lexico-grammatical options required. What the notional-functional syllabus wants the learner to acquire is, first, the knowledge of language structures, and second, the ability of using them in different situations to express ideas. The notional-functional approach to language teaching views all course components as a systematic whole, and classroom activities should be learner-centred.

I.3.3.3.2 Components

In the fully notional model proposed by Wilkins(1976), there is strong emphasis on Halliday's MEANING POTENTIAL -- the semantic system of the language, and thus the term "notional". There are two groups of categories, each of which can be subdivided. The first group consists of SEMANTICO-GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES, such as "*Time*", "*Quantity*", "*Space*", and so on. They help to change meanings into notions which can be dealt with by the grammar. The second group is composed of CATEGORIES OF COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTION, including "*Modality*", "*Personal emotions*", "*Emotional relations*", "*Interpersonal relations*", and some others. These categories can be characterized as the attitude of the speaker toward the subject being talked about, and what the speaker is doing with the utterance. The categories of communicative function help to convert grammatical sentences into actual utterances.

The functional model proposed by van Ek (1975) has much in common with Wilkins' notional model, but receives most of its influence from Halliday's concept of macrofunctions. The focus of the functional model is on what the learner can do with the

language rather than the meaning he wants to express. The components of this model include “*situation*”, “*language activities*”, “*language functions*”, “*general notions*”, “*specific notions*”, “*language forms*”, and some behavioural specifications. Situation refers to the extralinguistic conditions which determine a language act. It can be subdivided into SETTINGS, social and psychological ROLES, and TOPICS. Language activities are the combination and propotion of the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. General notions are similar to Wilkins’ semantico-grammatical categories, whereas specific notions are more strictly related to topics. Language functions have the following components:

1. imparting and seeking factual information
2. expressing and finding out intellectual attitudes;
3. expressing and finding out emotional attitudes;
4. expressing and finding out moral attitudes;
5. getting things done (suasion);
6. socialising

In the realisation of a functional syllabus, learners can be divided into target groups according to certain COMMON CORE — basic vocabulary and grammar, and subdivided into smaller groups according to specific notions or topics, such as: *Travel: travel to work, evening-class, etc.; holidays; countries and places; public transport; Relations with other people: friendship/aversion; invitations; correspondence;* Here the learner learns the language forms corresponding to each of the notions and language functions.

1.3.3.3.3 Pros and cons

While the structural syllabus restricts itself to the teaching of

grammar, which may be only the first step of learning, the functional-notional syllabus relates the abstract language form to its use in real situations. Since the relation between notions/functions and language forms are culture specific, the learner's attention is drawn to the special way a native speaker expresses himself. For example, the Chinese way of responding to others' compliment may not be permissible in the English culture, so the Chinese learner has to learn the special language forms in English to perform this function. Another advantage of the notional-functional syllabus is that the learner's motivation is highly stimulated, because there exists a close link between the learning objective and the learner's personal needs. Through the whole learning process this motivation is reinforced by his own success. The learner is constantly aware of what he is doing and every progress he has achieved leads him a step forward towards his learning objective.

Dispite its merits, the notional-functional syllabus has a number of problems. First of all it is impossible to make an exhaustive list of notions or functions, and it is very difficult to order them scientifically. Secondly, there is no one-to-one relationship between notions/functions and language forms. A sentence like "*It is cold today*" can serve as greeting, suggestion, refusal, and probably some other functions. Thirdly, the notional-functional syllabus treats language as isolated units, only they are notional rather than structural isolates. According to H.G. Widdowson, such a syllabus cannot achieve the communicative competence which it aims at. A true "communicative syllabus" should deal with discourse, not sentences, which are only components of discourse.

I.3.3.4 Communicative syllabus

I.3.3.4.1 General characteristics.

A **COMMUNICATIVE SYLLABUS** aims at the learner's communicative competence. Based on a notional-functional syllabus, it teaches the language needed to express and understand different kinds of functions, and emphasizes the process of communication.

I.3.3.4.2 Components

Summarizing the previous theories on communicative approach to syllabus design, Janice Yalden (1983) lists ten components of a communicative syllabus:

1. as detailed a consideration as possible of the purposes for which the learners wish to acquire the target language;
2. some idea of the setting in which they will want to use the target language (physical aspects need to be considered, as well as social setting);
3. the socially defined role the learners will assume in the target language, as well as the roles of their interlocutors.^①
4. The communicative events in which the learners will participate: everyday situations, vocational or professional situations, academic situations, and so on;
5. the language functions involved in these events, or what the learner will need to be able to do with or through the language;
6. the notions involved, or what the learner will need to

^① interlocutors: people who are actively engaged in conversation.

- be able to talk about;
7. the skills involved in the "knitting together" of discourse: discourse and rhetorical skills;
 8. the variety or varieties of the target language that will be needed, and the levels in the spoken and written language which the learners will need to reach;
 9. the grammatical content that will be needed;
 10. the lexical content that will be needed.

It is supposed that these ten components take into account everything required to assure communication. A communicative syllabus should take into consideration most of these factors, if not all. Since which component receives the most emphasis is flexible, there is a variety of communicative syllabus types, from the structural-functional to the fully communicative.

1.3.3.4.3 Fully communicative syllabus

The FULLY COMMUNICATIVE SYLLABUS stresses that linguistic competence is only a part of communicative competence. If we focus on communicative skills, most areas of linguistic competence will be developed naturally. Therefore, what we should teach is communication through language rather than language for communication. It is suggested that fully communicative teaching should do away with well-planned syllabuses. What should be decided is the problem of communication to be solved, and the teacher should involve his students into activities in which they imitate his use of language consciously or unconsciously. If the teacher can well direct this process, language learning will take care of itself.

Departing from grammar-based syllabuses, the fully communica-

tive syllabus goes to another extreme. In ideal situations, such a syllabus may be most conducive to the development of the learner's communicative competence. However, its practicality is under question. Once the planned syllabus disappears, the learning process is difficult to control. If the teacher is not a native speaker of the language being taught, and his teaching does not occur in a country where the language is widely spoken, it is very hard to create an authentic communicative context. On the learner's part, learning to communicate necessarily requires some knowledge of the language form.

I.4. Error analysis

I.4.1 Errors, mistakes, and error analysis

When a linguistic item is used as the result of faulty or incomplete learning, the learner is considered to have committed an error. A distinction is sometimes made between an error and a mistake. ERROR is the grammatically incorrect form; MISTAKE appears when the language is correct grammatically but improper in a communicational context. While errors always go with language learners, mistakes may also occur to native speakers. There is another type of fault, namely LAPSE, which refers to slips of the tongue or pen made by either foreign language learners or native speakers. ERROR ANALYSIS, as the term suggests, is the study and analysis of error and is confined to the language learner. However, here "error" refers generally to the learner's misuse or misunderstanding of the target language, may it be grammatical or pragmatic.

1.4.2 Attitudes to errors

With the development of applied linguistics, there have grown two kinds of attitudes towards learners' errors.

1.4.2.1 The structuralist view

The structuralist view of errors was dominant in the field of applied linguistics until the end of 1960. The structuralist linguists follow the behaviouristic view that to learn is to change old habits and build new habits. In their opinion errors occur when the learner fails to respond correctly to a particular stimulus in the second language. This is because the features of the second language differ from those of the native language and the learner tends to carry over features of the native language into the second language. In other words the learner fails to change his old habits so as to acquire new habits of the second language. Since an error may serve as a negative stimulus which reinforces "bad habits", it should not be allowed to occur.

1.4.2.2 Post-structuralist view

With the development of Transformational-Generative grammar and other linguistic theories, some changes of attitudes have taken place. First of all, the nature of language is viewed differently — learning a language involves making constant hypotheses about the structure of the target language. The learner tests his own hypothesis against what the native speaker says. The errors he makes are actually his incorrect hypothesis about the new language. Another change is the recognition of INTERLANGUAGE as a "separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a target

language form" (Selinker 1972). Interlanguage is formed when the learner attempts to learn a new language, and it has features of both the first and second language but is neither. According to Selinker, a theory of second language learning should be concerned with the surface structure of interlanguages so as to predict the learner's behavioural events and make clear the psychological structure of adult language learners.

The post-structuralists, therefore, regard errors as evidence of the learning process. By making hypothesis about the target language, the learner arrives at a particular interlanguage. Then he modifies his hypothesis and goes towards the target language. Obviously, errors can be found at the stage of interlanguages. As stated by Corder (1967), errors are significant in three different ways:

(1) They tell the teacher, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and consequently what remains for him to learn.

(2) They provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language.

(3) They are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he is learning. The making of errors then is a strategy employed both by children acquiring their mother tongue and by adults learning a second language.

I.4.3 Procedure of error analysis

The procedure of error analysis consists of the following steps:

(1) Recognition. Dealing with a sentence produced by the

language learner we should first ask whether the sentence is grammatically correct. If the answer is negative, then errors exist. If the answer is positive, then we further check whether the sentence is appropriate in the communicative context — a negative answer indicates a mistake.

(2) Description. If the erroneous sentence is intelligible, we compare it with the correct sentence produced by a native speaker and list the errors and mistakes. If the meaning of the sentence is not clear, we may refer to the learner's native language to find out what he means and carry out a contrastive analysis. Taking into consideration the use of language in social contexts, we can describe mistakes as well as errors.

(3) Explanation. When an error is recognized and described, we attempt to answer the question "*Why did the learner commit this error?*" In other words, we make hypothesis about the psychological processes which have caused the learner to commit the error. This will lead us to provide answers to a fundamental question "*How do people learn languages?*"

I.4.4 Contrastive analysis and non-contrastive analysis

There are two major approaches to error analysis — contrastive and non-contrastive.

I.4.4.1 Contrastive analysis

A large percentage of the errors are directly related to the learner's mother tongue. In pronunciation, for example, the Chinese learners of English tend to produce a full syllable instead of a consonant, because in Chinese syllables very often end in vowels. Thus "*a good old friend*" [ə' gu:ɪd əʊld frend] is pronounced as [ə 'gu:ɪdə əʊldə 'frendə]. At the level of lexicon, some words are

constantly mixed up, e.g. “borrow” and “lend”, “except” and “besides”. In syntax, Chinese learners often commit errors in tense and person-number agreement. Also, they tend to use a comma between two complete sentences because this is perfectly acceptable in Chinese.

There is plenty of evidence to show the widespread influence of the mother tongue. In the field of language learning theory, much effort has been devoted to the systematic study of evidence of the sort. Such a study is called **CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS** and it has grown to be a major concern of applied linguistics. In 1957, Robert Lado published his *Linguistic Across Cultures* in which he presented a large quantity of data and stated the importance of contrastive analysis. In the view of Lado and his followers, language learners attempt to **TRANSFER** the features of their mother tongue to the second language. When the structures of the two languages are similar, we can get **POSITIVE TRANSFER** or **FACILITATION**. When the two languages are different in structures, **NEGATIVE TRANSFER** or **INTERFERENCE** occurs and results in errors. Consequently, a contrastive analysis of the learner's native language and the target language will help the teacher to predict the difficulties that the learner has and this in turn determines what the learner has to learn and what the teacher has to teach. Since language learners have different mother tongues, the teaching has to vary accordingly.

I.4.4.2 Non-contrastive analysis

Not all errors are caused by the interference of the mother tongue and evidence of such can be easily found. Beginners of English often produce sentences like **“He speaked English”* and

*“*I cuted myself*”. Some learners constantly miss the articles in English, and after they are corrected, they tend to overuse them. The interference of the mother tongue cannot satisfactorily explain these errors. It is more reasonable to say that the learner knows some rules of English but applies them in the wrong place. Thus in the first case the learner overgeneralizes the rules for the change of verb forms. We may say the error is a result of **OVERGENERALIZATION** of the target language system. In the second case, the error can be called **HYPERCORRECTION**, because after an error is corrected, the correction is wrongly used elsewhere.

Quite surprisingly, there are also cases where transfer does not occur as predicted. While learning the English expression “*as long as*” which has the Chinese equivalence “*zhǐyào*” (只要), some Chinese learners produce awkward sentences such as “*As long as you are slow, you’ll miss the train.*” “*As long as the airplane stays at that height, it will crash*”. Here the interference does not come from Chinese, but from a previously learned English word “*if*”.

As analyzed above, a non-contrastive approach to error analysis is necessary. In fact, exact predictions about language learners’ errors are very difficult, because the factors which may cause errors and learners’ responses to these factors are complex. Some applied linguists such as Wilkins even suggest to abandon the idea of “transfer” since it cannot account for all the difficulties and errors that learners have in the learning process (Wilkins, 1972).

1.5. Testing

In 1.3.2.3, we mentioned two kinds of evaluation: external evaluation and internal evaluation. The internal evaluation is neces-

sarily connected with the use of tests — any procedure for measuring ability, knowledge, or performance. By analyzing the test results at the end of a programme, the teacher can check whether and to what degree the programme has achieved what it set out to achieve, or how much the learners have learned what they were supposed to learn. Given before a teaching programme starts, a test may provide information of the learners' mastery of the language, and so assist the teacher in choosing candidates or deciding the teaching content. Tests can also serve other purposes, such as determining if a candidate is competent for a particular task, or comparing different teaching methods. Naturally, the practice of language tests brings about testing theories, which are concerned with the principles, types, requirements, and other aspects of tests.

1.5.1 Two different approaches to testing

Currently there are two influential approaches to language testing, the **PSYCHOMETRIC-STRUCTURALIST APPROACH** and the **PSYCHOLINGUISTIC-SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROACH**. The linguistic basis of the psychometric-structuralist approach is mainly structuralist linguistics, and the aim of such tests is to discover the learner's mastery of linguistic knowledge or linguistic competence. The psychometric-structuralist approach claims to be scientific, because it uses statistical analysis to examine the test results as well as the test itself. This approach has been adopted by a great number of language teachers in the West.

As the current trend of linguistic theories has changed the view of language learning, applied linguists and language teachers have become increasingly interested in psycholinguistics and socio-

linguistics. A new approach to language testing is developed: the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach. While recognizing some basic concepts of the former testing theory, those who believe in communicative syllabuses challenge the widely accepted standard of measurement. They propose that the purpose of testing is to check the learner's performance, and test results should be measured by quality instead of quantity.

1.5.2 Types of test

Classified by different aims, there are at least four major types of test:

(1) Aptitude test

APTITUDE TESTS attempt to measure the learner's aptitude or natural abilities to learn languages. These tests usually consist of several different tests which measure respectively the ability to identify and remember sound patterns in a new language, the ability to identify the grammatical functions of different parts of sentences, the ability to work out meanings without explanation in a new language, and the ability to remember words, rules and so on in a new language. In order to assess these abilities, artificial languages are often employed.

(2) Proficiency test

The purpose of PROFICIENT TESTS is to discover what the testee already knows about the target language. A proficiency test is not concerned with any particular course but the learner's general level of language mastery. An example of proficiency test is the American TOEFL, which is used to measure the English language proficiency of foreign students who wish to study in the USA.

(3) Achievement test

An **ACHIEVEMENT TEST** assesses how much a learner has mastered the contents of a particular course. Clearly, the items in such a test should be based on what has been taught. The mid-term and final examinations held in schools and universities are often typical tests of this kind.

(4) Diagnostic test

A **DIAGNOSTIC TEST** is designed to discover mainly what the testee does not know about the language. For example, a diagnostic English pronunciation test may be used to show which sounds a student is and is not able to pronounce. A test of such kind can help the teacher to find out what is wrong with the previous learning and what should be included in the future work.

I.5.3 Requirements of a good test

Taking a psychometric-structuralist view, Lado (1961) proposes two basic requirements that a test must fulfil: **VALIDITY** and **RELIABILITY**.

I.5.3.1 Validity

VALIDITY is the degree to which a test measures what it is meant to measure. If candidates are familiar with the topic, for example, the validity of the test will be reduced. Listed below are several kinds of validity:

(1) Content validity

CONTENT VALIDITY refers to the extent to which the test adequately covers the syllabus area to be tested. This form of validity is especially important in an achievement test, which should reflect both the content and the balance of the teaching. Content

validity can be affected by the length, selection of topics, and some other factors of the test.

(2) Construct validity

If the test proves the theoretical construct on which it is based, it can be said to have **CONSTRUCT VALIDITY**. For example, a teacher believing in linguistic competence designs a test of such competence in a language. If this test demonstrates great relationship with the theory of linguistic competence, the test then has a high degree of construct validity.

(3) Empirical validity

If the results of a test correlate with some external criteria, the test can be said to possess **EMPIRICAL VALIDITY**. Empirical validity can be "concurrent", when test results match the results of other valid tests or independent measures or "predictive", when test results correspond with another criterion such as success in a particular job at a later time.

(4) Face validity

Unlike the other three forms of validity, face validity is based on the subjective judgement of an observer. If the test appears to be measuring what it intends to measure, the test is considered to have face validity.

1.5.3.2 Reliability

RELIABILITY can be defined as consistency. If a test produces the same or very similar results when given to the same candidates twice in succession or marked by different people, it is regarded as having high degree of reliability.

Reliability can be affected by two kinds of error. The **EXTRINSIC SOURCES OF ERROR** consist of the variability of the

testers and testees, and the variability of the test situation. The **INTRINSIC SOURCES OF ERROR** are within the test itself. These occur when there is a lack of stability or equivalence.

(1) Stability reliability

A measuring device is stable if it gives the same reading when used twice on the same object, assuming there is no change in the object between the two measurements. **STABILITY RELIABILITY** is also called test-retest reliability, because it is estimated by testing and retesting the same candidates, and then correlating their scores.

(2) Equivalence reliability

A measuring device is equivalent to another if they produce the same results when used on the same objects. To estimate **EQUIVALENCE RELIABILITY**, the tester can either construct two parallel tests with the same items of the same degree of difficulty, or compare two tests of similar nature.

I.5.3.3 Validity and reliability under criticism

Many people who take the communicative approach to language teaching cast doubts on validity and reliability as standard test requirements. One of their reasons is that there does not exist an absolute validity. If its theoretical foundation is linguistic competence, test with high content, construct or concurrent validity may still fail to show how well the learner can use the language in communicative contexts. Therefore, validity only exists in correspondence with specified criteria. If the criteria themselves are not appropriate, then the validity of the test is not of much value.

As for reliability, a major problem lies in its claimed basis of objectivity. Pilliner (1968) and Robinson (1973) argue that Lado's

tests are objective only in terms of actual assessment. The construction of the test itself and the evaluation of the numerical scores still depend on subjective factors. Moreover, an objective test is often connected with fixed response items. Since the amount of language the testee produces is very limited, by such an objective test one cannot see how well the testee can use the target language. There exists a reliability-validity "tension" which reduces the value of the two criteria.

I.5.4 Test content and test form

I.5.4.1 Structural tests

Based on the psychometric-structuralist approach, the **STRUCTURAL TESTS** focus on the linguistic competence of the testees. What is to be tested is mainly the knowledge of the language structure represented by any of the four skills. When the language structures or skills are further divided into individual points of phonology, syntax and lexis, it is called a **DISCRETE POINT TEST**. Items like multiple choice and true-or-false response often appear in discrete point tests. As language structures and skills are not easily isolated in pure test items, another test form comes into being, namely the **INTEGRATIVE TEST**. An integrative test or test item operates on more than one level of structure or combines more than one language skills. Cloze test, dictation and translation are all items of this sort.

I.5.4.2 Communicative tests

Based on the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic approach, **COMMUNICATIVE TESTS** are intended to check the testee's communi-

cative competence. They set out to show whether or how well the candidates can perform a set of specified activities. To serve this purpose, a PERFORMANCE TEST is believed to be most relevant, especially when the tester wants to examine the testee's general communicative proficiency or aptitude. In a performance test, a candidate is required to perform some "global tasks", each of which calls for some "enabling skills". An example is shown as follows (Morrow, 1979):

ex. 1—3

Global Task

Search text for specific information

Enabling skills

e.g. Distinguish main point from supporting
details

Understand text relations through grammatical
cohesion devices

Understand relations within sentences

Understand conceptual meaning

Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexis

The enabling skills are supposed to be different from the discrete points of the language structure, because the skills derive from an analysis of task performance. It is assumed that the candidate's performance in a test of such kind should demonstrate his communicative competence.

1.5.5 Marking and interpretation of scores

By giving marks to the candidates and analyzing the test results, many things can be found about the teaching, the candidates, and the test itself: How is one candidate compared with others?

Has he mastered certain specifics which he is required to master? How do the results reflect the teaching of one teacher compared with another? Do they imply that the teaching content should be improved? Is the test valid and reliable?

In the case of objective tests, one can rely on statistical analysis to establish relationship between different sets of numbers and thus find out the answer to the question under investigation. This method of quantitative analysis has been widely practised by language teachers in the West. In the modern age of science and technology, more and more test designers seek help from the computer in marking and test result analysis. The details of statistical analysis is too involved for the scope of the present book.

As for subjective tests, especially a performance test, the results are not easily quantifiable. In order to provide some standards for the marking of performance tests, some applied linguists have made valuable proposals. B.J. Carroll(1977) distinguishes different levels of performance by taking account of the following parameters (Morrow, 1979):

size	}	of text which can be handled
complexity		
Range		of, e.g. enabling skills, structures, functions which can be handled
Speed		at which language can be processed
Flexibility		shown in dealing with changes of, e.g. topic
Accuracy	}	with which, e.g. enabling skills, structures, functions, can be handled
Appropriacy		
Independence		from reference sources and interlocutor
Repetition	}	in processing text
Hesitation		

The candidate's performance can be measured by each of the above criteria, and his separate marks for these criteria add to a total score. Another way of marking is to produce an overall impression mark only, given that the tester bases his impression on specified criteria. In spite of the numerical scores used, the modes of assessment are not directly quantitative.

For such a performance test, content, construct and predictive validity are important, but concurrent validity with tests of other nature is not significant. Due to the subjectivity of different testers, reliability is not easy to achieve. However, it is believed that for such tests reliability is subordinate to face validity, and quality has priority over quantity. The term "communicative" has become a catchphrase in language teaching, and an increasing body of literature has been devoted to communicative testing in recent years. Nevertheless, the theoretical models of communicative testing are still to be proved by convincing data.

1.6. Summary

Linguistic theories have influenced language teaching decisions at various stages: defining the goals of learning, designing syllabus, organizing the teaching content, determining the methodological approach and particular techniques, choosing ways of assessment, and so on. All these stages are connected with each other, and behind any chain of decisions is certain belief of the language learning nature. In fact, different attitudes and approaches to syllabus design and testing can be put on a continuum, with one extreme focusing on the linguistic competence and the other on the communicative competence. Teaching methodologies adopted by these syllabuses also fit into this continuum. While the teacher-

centred methodology corresponds to the pole of linguistic competence, the learner-centred methodology corresponds to the pole of communicative competence. Since the early 70s, the trends in linguistic theories have pushed applied linguists and language teachers in the West to move towards the communicative end, yet so far little success has been made in the implementation of an ideal model.

Having discussed some applications and implications that linguistic theories have in the field of language teaching, there are two points to which we want to draw our readers' attention. First, language teaching is a very practical business. A good knowledge of linguistic theories does not necessarily make a good language teacher. The teacher on his own part should start from the empirical reality and look for the part of linguistic theories which is applicable and valuable for him. Instead of being carried away by miscellaneous linguistic notions, he must always be aware of the learners' needs. Secondly, linguistics is not the only theoretical field which has impact on language teaching practice. Other studies such as education and psychology also exert strong influences. The theoretical background of teaching methodology, for example, is often largely a psychological one. Therefore, linguistics has to be placed appropriately in relation to other theoretical fields.

Exercises

1. Define the following terms:

applied linguistics

communicative competence

syllabus

interlanguage

transfer

validity

reliability

error analysis

hypercorrection

discrete point test

integrative test

2. Differentiate structural, situational, and notional syllabuses.
3. Distinguish between errors and mistakes.
4. Differentiate aptitude, proficiency, achievement and diagnostic tests.
5. The following are extracts from actual teaching materials. Point out the type of syllabus each of them best fits into.

(A) Contents

Introduction

Transport

Asking the Way

On a Bus

Taking a Taxi

At a Railway Station

The London Underground

Booking Airline Tickets

Hiring a Car

At a Garage

Food and Drink

At Lunch

Tea-time

...

(B) Contents

Text

Dialogue

Grammar

**Pronunciation/
Intonation**

A Day at
College

My Home

(1)

Introduction
of tenses

Intonations of
general

(2) Simple pre- questions and
sent tense their answers

(3) General ques-
tions

(4) The possessive
case

A Letter to a Friend	Weather	(1) Special questions	Intonation of special questions
		(2) Form ques- tions on different parts of a sentence	
		(3) The cardinal number	
		(4) Non-personal "it"	

(C) Obligation and Necessity

- (1) Confirming procedures
- (2) Confirming obligations
- (3) Recognising obligations (1)
- (4) Recognising obligations (2)
- (5) Questioning obligations

A little boy is going to visit the zoo with his mother.

His mother wants him to get ready.

Mother: Right! You must wash your hands.

Boy: Do I have to wash them?

Mother: Yes, you do. And you must comb your hair

too.

Boy: Do I have to comb it?

6. Use contrastive or noncontrastive strategies to analyze the underlined errors and mistakes committed by Chinese learners of English:

- (A) He borrowed the book to me.
- (B) After a teacher helped a student to solve some problems, the student said politely, "Trouble you!"
- (C) "Bill went to the counter and said, 'Two teas, please'," the teacher was going to continue when a student called out, "Some tea, not two teas! Tea is an uncountable noun!"
- (D) When writing to an old friend, a student begins his English letter with

Dear Ming.

How do you do? ...

7. Discussion:

- (A) Describe the language syllabuses in which you have been trained. What categories do they fall into? What are their pros and cons?
- (B) As a language teacher, you have two groups of learners:
Group I: Foreign experts who have come to China to teach. They do not know any Chinese at the moment and want to know enough of the language to get around.
Group II: The first-year students of English at your college.

Design syllabuses for them respectively. Describe the kinds of test included in each programme, and give examples of the

test items.

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APPENDIX II

MODERN LINGUISTIC SCHOOLS AND THEORIES

II.1 Ferdinand de Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857—1913) was a Swiss linguist who occupies an important place in the history of linguistics. During the years between 1907 to 1911, he lectured on general linguistics in the University of Geneva. After he died in 1913, his colleagues and students thought that his ideas concerning linguistic questions were original and insightful and should be preserved. Two of his students, Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, collected lecture notes from students and put them together to produce the great work *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916. This book became the most important source of Saussure's ideas and of his influence upon succeeding generations of linguists. Most people agree that Saussure's work marked the beginning of modern linguistics. Jonathan Culler (1976) says, "Ferdinand de Saussure is the father of modern linguistics, the man who reorganized the systematic study of language and languages in such a way as to make possible the achievements of twentieth-century linguistics. This alone would make him a Modern Master: master of a discipline which he made modern."

II.1.1 Nature of the linguistic sign

Saussure would not agree to the idea that language is just a naming-process, a list of words, each corresponding to the thing it

names. For this would assume that ready-made ideas exist before words. He argues that the linguistic unit is a SIGN. The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The sound-image is not just a purely physical thing, but a psychological imprint of the sound; the concept is generally more abstract. It is the combination of the two that makes up the whole of the linguistic sign. To make the relation between the three terms clearer, Saussure calls the concept SIGNIFIED and the sound-image SIGNIFIER, thus separating the two from each other and from the whole of which they are parts. The word "*sister*", for example, is a linguistic sign; its sound-image is the signifier and the person it refers to is the signified.

The linguistic sign has two important characteristics. First, the bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. This also means that the linguistic sign is arbitrary. That is, there is no intrinsic connection between the signifier and the signified. There is no inner relationship between, say, the idea of "*sister*" and the sequence of sounds [s-i-s-t-ə], as the idea of "*sister*" can be signified by any other sequence of sounds in other languages. Saussure says that the signifier appears to be freely chosen with respect to the idea it represents, but it is fixed with respect to the linguistic community that uses it. Members of the community have choice in the pattern. Language is a product inherited from preceding generations. A particular language state is always the product of historical forces, and these forces explain why language is unchangeable.

The second characteristic of the linguistic sign is the linear nature of the signifier. The signifier is auditory and therefore is unfolded solely in time. As a result of this, the signifier represents a time span and the span is measurable in one single dimension, the dimen-

sion of time. The linear nature of the signifier is as important as the arbitrary nature of the sign. Because of this, the elements of the signifier are presented in succession - they form a chain, which makes the processing of them possible. This feature becomes more obvious when elements of the signifier are represented in writing, in which case the spatial line of graphic marks is substituted for succession in time.

II.1.2 The relational nature of language units

Since the relation between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, there is no necessary reason for one concept rather than another to be attached to a given signifier. Consequently, there is no defining property which the concept must retain in order to count as the signifier of that signified. In other words, there is no essential core of meaning that a signified must have in order to count as the proper signified for that signifier. The signifiers are nothing but members of a system and they are defined by their relations to the other members of that system. If in a language there are only two terms to divide up the life span of man "*old*" and "*young*", each of them will probably take up half of the years of life. If, however, there are three words, "*old*", "*middle age*", and "*young*", then each of them will take up only one-third of man's life. For this reason, in order to explain what "*old*" means, one has to explain it in relation to what "*middle age*" and "*young*" mean. Similarly, to explain what "*red*" is, one has to say that it is not "*brown*", "*blue*", "*green*", etc.. Generalizing the point, Saussure says that "in all cases, then, we discover not **ideas** given in advance but **values** emanating from the system. When we say that these values correspond to concepts, it is understood that these concepts are purely differential, not posi-

tively defined by their content but negatively defined by their relations with other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is that they are what the others are not." It is for this reason that linguistic units have a purely relational identity. For example, we would take the timetable at a railway station as a system of trains. In this system, the 10:00 Beijing-to-Shanghai Express is taken to be the same train each day, even though the coaches, locomotive and personnel change from one day to the next. What gives the train its identity is its place in the system of trains. It remains the same train even if it leaves ten or twenty minutes late. It is its relation to other trains that determines its identity - it is distinguished from other trains.

Another analogy Saussure uses to illustrate the notion of relational identity is the comparison between language and chess. The physical shape of the chess pieces (king, queen, rook, etc.) and the material from which they are made of are not important. The king, for instance, can be big or small, and can be made of wood, stone, or ivory; as long as it is distinct from other pieces, it functions as the king. If a piece is lost, we can replace it with any other object so long as it will not be confused with other pieces. The same is true with the signifier. It can be anything, as long as it is different from other signifiers in the same system. The signifier representing "*bed*", for example, is not defined by any particular noises used in uttering it—in fact, the noises are different each time it is uttered. We could use the signifier "*bed*", to represent, the signified "*bed*" and vice versa, and the language system will be fundamentally the same.

II.1.3 *Langue* and *parole*

Saussure made a distinction that had never been made before him: the distinction between **LANGUE** and **PAROLE**. *Langue* is the system of a language, the language as a system of forms. *Parole* is actual speech, the speech acts that are made possible by the system of the language. *Langue* is what the individual assimilates when he learns a language; it exists in the mind of each speaker. "It is the social product whose existence permits the individual to exercise his linguistic faculty." *Parole*, on the other hand, is the "executive side of language".

Saussure argues that the task of the linguist is to study *langue*. The linguist, in analyzing language, is not to describe speech acts, but to determine the units and rules of combination which make up the linguistic system. Saussure believes that *la langue* is a coherent, analyzable object.

The distinction between *langue* and *parole* is important. In distinguishing them, we are separating what is social from what is individual and what is essential from what is accidental. If we study the phenomenon of speech we will find so many things relevant to our study and the work will end up in confusion. If we concentrate on *la langue*, then every aspect of language and speech fall into place within it. Put it differently, if we study *la langue*, we can ask if the phenomenon under examination belongs to *la langue* or is simply a realization of the system.

In fact, it is the distinction between *langue* and *parole* that leads to the distinction between phonetics and phonology. Phonetics studies speech sounds from a physical point of view and phonology studies the functional units within the linguistic system. When we describe the speech sound in "bed", for example, we find they are

different each time they are uttered even by the same speaker. However, the identity of “*bed*” does not depend on the nature of these actual sounds (that is, Speaker A’s sounds may be different from Speaker B’s sounds in producing “*bed*”, but they are understood as uttering the same word), but on the distinctions that separate “*bed*” from “*bet*”, “*bad*”, “*beed*”, “*pet*”, and so on. These distinctions are functional, belonging to the phonological system, while the physical differences in actual sounds (loudness and pitch, for instance) are not.

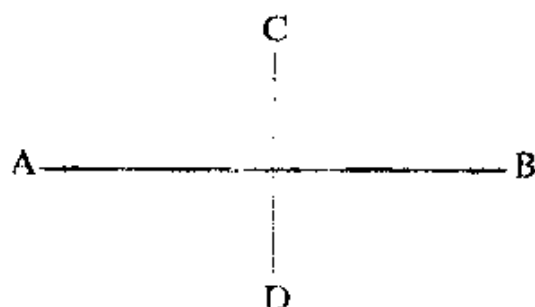
The same distinction between what belongs to particular acts and what belongs to the system leads us also to the distinction between utterance and sentence. An utterance is a unit of *parole*; a sentence is a unit of *langue*. Two utterances can be the realization of the same sentence. Pronouns are good examples to illustrate the point. Within the linguistic system, “*I*” or “*he*” or “*they*” does not refer to anyone. Their meaning within the system is the result of the distinction between them all. Once they are used in specific context, they refer to specific persons. This leads Saussure to suggest the terms of SIGNIFICATION and VALUE. Linguistic units have a value within the system; it is the result of oppositions that define them. When the units are used in an utterance, they have a signification; it is the contextualized meaning.

The distinction between *langue* and *parole* has important implications for other disciplines as well. It is essential for any field of research to distinguish what belongs to the underlying system which makes possible various types of behaviour and what belongs to actual instances of such behaviour. Suppose it is the fashion of dress that is under investigation. It is important to discover the underlying meaning of each type of dress in the given community.

This meaning is conventional and arbitrary, and often culture specific. It is this underlying system that makes it possible for the wearer of a specific type of dress to signify what he means by wearing it.

II.1.4 The relation between diachronic and synchronic studies

Another great contribution by Saussure to general linguistics is the distinction between diachronic studies and synchronic studies. Language exists in time and changes through time. If we study language as it exists at a particular point in time, it is **SYNCHRONIC STUDY**. If we study language as it exists in different historical periods, it is **DIACHRONIC STUDY**. Saussure uses the simple diagram to show the relations between the two:



Here **AB** is the axis of simultaneities. It stands for the relations of all coexisting linguistic facts in a language and on it the intervention of time is excluded. **CD** is the axis of successions. It stands for all the language states that a language has gone through; on it only one thing can be considered at a time. Axis **CD** also includes all the things on Axis **AB** together with their changes. When we study the phenomena that make language pass from one state to another, it is also called **EVOLUTIONARY LINGUISTICS**. When we study language states, it is also called **STATIC LINGUISTICS**.

Saussure argues that "when we study the facts of language ... their succession in time does not exist insofar as the speaker is concerned. He is confronted with a state. That is why the linguist who wishes to understand a state must discard all knowledge of everything that produced it and ignore diachrony."

Saussure again uses the game of chess to illustrate his point. A game of chess is very much like the system of language. They are both system of values. A state of the set of chessmen is like a state of language. "The respective value of the pieces depends on their position on the chessboard just as each linguistic term derives its value from its opposition to all the other terms." On the other hand, the value of each piece also depends on the convention — the set of rules that exists before the game begins. This is like the set of rules that exists in language. A state of the game of chess is momentary just like a state of language changes. When one piece is moved, the game passes from one state of equilibrium to the next. This corresponds closely to the situation of language between states. To study this static state is called synchronic linguistics. The moving of one piece is like one type of change in language. The consequence of one move can be very big or small; the same is true with language changes. The player of a chess game is solely concerned with the momentary positions of the pieces; he does not need to remember the previous moves so as to decide the next move. A player who knows the history of the game does not necessarily have more say about the next move than a man who has just come to the game, ignorant of what has happened before. Similarly, a speaker of a language can learn the language well without knowing its historical states. We can describe a state of a game without bothering the techniques both players have used to bring about the state. Likewise,

we can describe the state of a language without knowing its history.

After careful explanation, Saussure defines synchronic and diachronic linguistics as follows: **SYNCHRONIC LINGUISTICS** will be concerned with the logical and psychological relations that bind together coexisting terms and form a system in the collective mind of speakers." **DIACHRONIC LINGUISTICS**, on the contrary, will study relations that bind together successive terms not perceived by the collective mind but substituted for each other without forming a system."

Since synchrony and diachrony are so different, their methods of study also differ. **SYNCHRONY** has only one perspective, the perspective of the speakers. Its method consists of gathering evidence for speakers, to know what is a linguistic reality, sufficient to determine to what extent it exists in the mind of speaker. On the other hand, **DIACHRONY** must have two perspectives: the prospective and the retrospective. That is, it has to follow the course of time and also go back in time. Furthermore, synchrony studies the totality of facts corresponding to each language. Diachrony does not specialize in any one language; often it studies facts that do not belong to the same language.

II.2 The Prague School

II.2.1 Introduction

The **PRAGUE SCHOOL** has left its important mark in the development of linguistics. D. Bolinger says in his *Aspects of Language* (1968), "No other European group has wielded quite as much influence as this one (the Prague School)"; "The Prague group has

influenced every important development in the United States."

The beginnings of the Prague School may be dated by the first meeting of the Circle of Linguistics of Prague in 1926. Its first chairman, Vilém Mathesius (1882—1946), founded the School at this meeting. It included such linguists as Roman Jakobson (b. 1869) and Nikolai Trubetzkoy (1890—1938). The first common task which faced the members of the Circle was the formulation of collective theses to be presented to the First International Congress of Slavists in Prague in 1929. These theses were later published in Volume One of the *Travaux de Cercle Linguistique de Prague*. It was through the eight volumes of this collection of papers, which were published until 1939, that the Prague School became known abroad. Their work was somewhat interrupted by World War II. The last collective preparation of papers was in 1948 when the Sixth International Congress of Linguistics was held in Paris. The Circle formally ceased to exist in 1950. Now there are two groups of linguists who are carrying forward the Circle's tradition. One is the Linguistic Association which mainly comprises specialists in general linguistics and phonetics, and in Slavic languages. The other is the Circle of Modern Philologists who represent linguists in the field of English, Germanic and Romance languages. These organizations are not only active in Prague, but have several branches in many parts of Czechoslovakia.

The main emphasis of the Prague School theory is on the analysis of language as a system of functionally related units, an emphasis which shows Saussurean influence. This emphasis has led to the distinction between the phonetic and phonological analysis of sounds, and the analysis of phonemes into distinctive features. In recent years Prague School ideas have been developed with re-

ference to the syntax, semantics and stylistics of English and Slavonic languages. In what follows, we shall mainly discuss the School's contribution to phonology and its functional analysis of language.

II.2.2 Phonological oppositions

The Prague School is well known for its contribution to phonology. The most influential scholar in this connection is Trubetzkoy, who formulated his authoritative statements in *Principles of Phonology* in 1939. It is found that for each abstract sound, there is a range than a point in which speakers are allowed to make the actual realization of it different from every other realization by themselves and also distinct from every other realization by other people. When the realization is beside the range, it will be understood as producing another sound or saying something else. If we ignore the meaning of the sounds, we can find features peculiar to each realization. Some features have no significance; they make no difference to the meaning of the word. Some do make differences; they are significant sounds or distinctive sounds. What serves to differentiate the phonological unit is not the sound itself, but rather the sound's contrastive functions. A phoneme, therefore, can be defined as the sum of these differentiating functions. A phoneme has three characteristics: (1) it has discriminative power; (2) it cannot be analysed into smaller distinctive segments; (3) it can only be determined by distinctive features.

Trubetzkoy distinguished nine phonological oppositions among phonemes according to their relation to the whole contrastive system, relations between the opposing members and their power of discrimination:

1. Bilateral opposition: If the features two phonemes share

belong only to them, they are **BILATERAL OPPOSITION**. In other words, the features they have in common do not occur simultaneously in any other phoneme. In English, /p/ and /b/ are both bilabial sounds; no other sound has the feature "bilabial". So /p/ and /b/ are in bilateral opposition.

2. Multilateral opposition: **MULTILATERAL OPPOSITION** is a loosely established relationship. For example, /a/ and /i/ are alike only to the extent that both are vowels, a quality shared by any other pairs of vowels.

3. Proportional opposition: A pair of phonemes is **PROPORTIONAL** if the same contrastive features also serve as the differentiating criterion for other pairs of phonemes. For instance, sonority (that is, voiced versus unvoiced) is the contrastive feature between not only /p/ and /b/, but also between /t/ and /d/, and /k/ and /g/.

4. Isolated opposition: If the contrastive feature is unique to the pair of phonemes (i.e. it is not a contrastive feature of any other pair of phonemes in the language), then the two phonemes are in **ISOLATED OPPOSITION**. In English, /v/ is a labial-dental fricative, and /l/ is lateral voiced; the opposition between them is not shared by any other pair of phonemes in English.

5. Privative opposition: **PRIVATIVE OPPOSITION** is the opposition when one member of the contrastive pair is characterized by the presence of a certain feature while the other by its absence. For example, aspiration versus lack of aspiration is the privative opposition between /p/ and /b/; nasalization versus lack of nasalization is the privative opposition between /m/ and /n/.

6. Gradual opposition: If the pair of phonemes share different degrees of a feature, their relation then is **GRADUAL OPPOSITION**. In a language with seven-vowel system:

i	u
e	o
ɛ	ɔ
a	

the relation between /u/ and /ɔ/ is gradual, for sharing the same feature of tongue height (of the vowel) is a third vowel /ɔ/.

7. Equipollent opposition: If the pair of phonemes is not in gradual opposition, nor in privative opposition, they are logical equipollents and are in **EQUIPOLLENT OPPOSITION**, such as English /t/ and /p/, /t/ and /k/.

8. Neutralizable opposition: If a pair of phonemes contrast in some position but not in others, they are in **NEUTRALIZABLE OPPOSITION**. English /p/ and /b/ do not contrast after /s/. In German, the voiced consonants at the end-position become voiceless. “*Rat*” (persuade) and “*Rad*” (wheel) are pronounced the same way; but their plurals are different: /rɛitə/ and /rɛɪdər/.

9. Constant opposition: When the pair of phonemes occur in all possible positions without neutralizing effect, they are called **CONSTANT OPPOSITION**.

II.2.3 Functional sentence perspective (FSP)

For some time Czechoslovak linguists devoted attention to the problem of analysing the sentence from a functional point of view. They believe a sentence contains a point of departure and a goal of discourse. The point of departure is equally present to the speaker and to the hearer — it is their rallying point, the ground on which they meet. This is called the **THEME**. The goal of discourse presents the very information that is to be imparted to the hearer. This is called the **RHEME**. It is believed that the movement from the

Theme to the Rheme reveals the movement of the mind itself. Languages may use different syntactic structures, but the order of ideas remains basically the same. Based on these observations, they have created the notion **FUNCTIONAL SENTENCE PERSPECTIVE** (FSP) to describe how information is distributed in sentences. FSP deals particularly with the effect of the distribution of known (or given) information and new information in discourse. The **KNOWN INFORMATION** refers to information that is not new to the reader or hearer. The **NEW INFORMATION** is what is to be transmitted to the reader or hearer. As we can see the subject-predicate distinction is not always the same as the Theme and Rheme contrast. We may compare:

ex. II-1

(a)	<u>Jane</u>	<u>stood on it</u>	(b)	<u>On it</u>	<u>stood</u>	<u>Jane</u>
	Subject	Predicate		Predicat		Subject
	Theme	Rheme		Theme		Rheme

Jane is the grammatical subject in both sentences, but is the Theme in (a) and the Rheme in (b).

We can approach a sentence at three levels and distinguish between the **Grammatical Sentence Pattern (GSP)**, the **Semantic Sentence Pattern (SSP)**, and the **Communicative Sentence Pattern (CSP)**. The CSP shows that there is already a distinction between sentence and utterance. A sentence belongs to the abstract system while an utterance belongs to an instance of the system.

In research into the relation between structure and function, Jan Firbas developed the notion of **COMMUNICATIVE DYNAMISM (CD)**. It is based on the fact that linguistic communication is not a static but a dynamic phenomenon. CD is meant to measure the amount of information an element carries in a sentence. In

"*He was angry*", for example, "*he*" carries the lowest degree of CD, "*angry*" carries the highest degree, and "*was*" will rank between them. If an element is singled out to establish a sharp opposition, as in "*He WAS reading the newspaper*", it would be the only element that carries new information (therefore contextually independent) while all the other elements would convey known information (and therefore contextually dependent). Consequently contextually dependent elements carry the lowest degree of CD because of the operation of the context. A contextually independent object (e.g. "*I have read a nice book*") will carry a higher degree of CD than the finite verb. This is because the object expresses an essential amplification of the verb and is therefore more important. Similarly, a contextually independent adverbial element of place will have a higher degree of CD than a verb expressing motion (e.g. "*He was hurrying to the railway station*"). This is because the adverbial element indicates the direction of the motion and is therefore more important than the motion itself.

Normally the subject carries a lower degree of CD than the verb and/or the object and/or adverbial. This is because a known or unknown agent appears to be communicatively less important than an unknown action expressed by the finite verb, an unknown goal expressed by the object or by the adverbial element. However, if the subject is accompanied by a verb expressing existence or appearance on the scene and is contextually independent, then it carries the highest degree of CD. This is understandable, for an unknown person or thing appearing on the scene is communicatively more important than the act of appearing and the scene itself. For example, "*An old man appeared in the waiting room at five o'clock*". If the subject of the structure is contextually dependent, a contextually

independent adverbial of time or place becomes an important element, exceeding in CD both the subject and the finite verb, as in "*The old man was sitting in the waiting room*".

The linear arrangement of a sentence also operates on the level of FSP when it is unhampered by context or semantic structure. For example, a contextually independent infinitive of purpose carries lower degree of CD when occurring finally, as in "*In order to see his friend, he went to Prague*" (cp. "*He went to Prague to see his friend*"). Similarly, with the direct and indirect objects, if they are contextually independent, the one coming later in the linear arrangement carries a higher degree of CD. We can see this difference in "*He gave a boy an apple*" and "*He gave an apple to a boy*".

II.3 American structuralism

II.3.1 Introduction

The linguistic scene here is different from that of Europe. In Europe there is a long tradition of linguistic investigation. In America there is no such a history in linguistics. However, there was a sense of urgency in the early years of the twentieth century: many American Indian languages were dying and there was an urgent need to record and describe these languages. America is unique in the number and diversity of its native languages. There are probably well over one thousand American Indian languages grouped into 150 families. It is said that in California alone there are more languages than in the whole of Europe. To record and describe these exotic languages, it is probably better not to have any presuppositions about the nature of language in general. This explains why there was not much development in linguistic theory during this period but a lot of discussion

on descriptive procedures.

In the early years of this century, much of the linguistic work was done by missionaries and anthropologists. One of the important anthropologists was Franz Boas (1858—1942). Boas specialized in the anthropology of North America. He worked as organizer of a survey of the many indigenous languages of America north of Mexico. The result of the survey was the book *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (1919). Boas wrote several chapters for the book and an important introduction, which is still a good summary of the descriptive approach to language. Boas trained the men who investigated other languages. For decades, all the great names of American linguistics learned their subject from Boas at first or second hand.

Unlike the Europeans who stressed the universals in language, Boas, based on his own experience, stressed that human languages were endlessly diverse. He considered the study of the grammatical categories peculiar to each language to be the most important task of the linguist. Boas also believed that language and culture and race were three separate issues. There were many cases where groups belonging to the same race speak unrelated languages, or a single language is spoken by men of great ethnic diversity. Similarly, speakers of one family of language sometimes belong to very diverse cultural groups or vice versa.

Another important linguist during this period is Edward Sapir (1884—1939). Sapir met Boas in 1900, and was inspired and influenced by him a great deal. As a result of this meeting, he undertook the description of American Indian languages after Boas' method. He used a native informant in his own cultural surroundings, recorded facts about the language and then did his analysis. This

was a novel experience for Sapir and a radical departure from the traditional practice of trying to impose the grammatical categories of Indo-European languages upon all other languages. His work is best summed up in his book *Language* published in 1921. He defines language as "a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols." He also compared speech with walking. "Walking is an inherent, biological function of man." "Speech is non-instinctive, acquired, cultural function." His *Language* deals with a wide range of problems, such as the elements of speech, the sounds of language, form in language, grammatical process, grammatical concepts, types of linguistic structure, and historical changes. Sapir also discussed the relation between language and thought. He says, "From the point of language, thought may be defined as the highest latent or potential content of speech, the content that is obtained by interpreting each of the elements in the flow of language as possessed of its very fullest conceptual value."

Other names associated with American structuralism are L. Bloomfield, C. C. Fries, Charles Hockett, and others.

II.3.2 Structural grammar

In contrast to the traditional grammar, the structural approach is based on the assumption that grammatical categories should be defined not in terms of meaning but in terms of distribution, and that the structure of each language should be described without reference to the alleged universality of such categories as tense, mood and parts of speech. Structural analysis is said to be formal, in the sense that the units of the analysis are defined internally in relation to each other, rather than externally in relation to psychological or logical

categories that are not part of the language system. By DISTRIBUTION it is meant that a linguistic unit is restricted in a characteristic way with respect to the contexts in which it can occur. For example, Fries would recognize four "form classes" and fifteen groups of function words in the sentence structure of English. The form classes are defined as follows: Class 1 words would fit into such frames as

(The) _____ (was nice).

(The) _____ (visited the) _____

Class 2 words fit into frames such as

(The man) _____ (good).

(The man) _____ (the building).

Class 3 words fit the frame:

(The man is/was) _____.

(The man visited the building) _____.

(The man went there) _____.

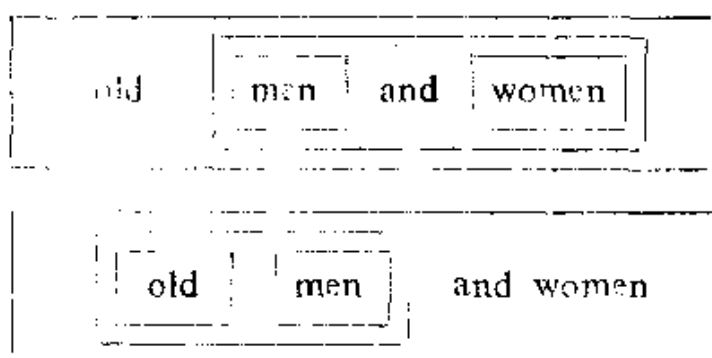
These form classes and the traditional parts of speech do not coincide exactly. The form classes are recognized as a set of formal structural units which can be described objectively and then used as a basis for the concept of meaning. By using distributional criteria rather than meaning in description the linguist tries to avoid subjective decisions and to ensure that every part of the description can be tested and verified. Among the fifteen groups of function words, the first three are: Group A contains all words for the position in which the word "*the*" occurs (e.g. "*The lecture was interesting*"), such as "*a*", "*an*", "*every*", "*my*", "*some*", etc. Group B contains words for the position in which words "*may*", "*had*", etc. occur, as in "*The lecture may be boring*", "*He had finished his lectures*". Group C has one word only, that is "*not*", as in "*The lecture may*

not be interesting".

The second important idea in structural grammar is that the sentence is seen as a sequence of immediate constituents. (See 7.2.2.)

One advantage of immediate constituent analysis (IC analysis) is that it helps to account for the ambiguities of some structures. This is because IC analysis not only shows sequential relations but also hierarchical relations. In "*old men and women*", for instance, does "*old*" just modify "*men*" or as well as "*women*"? Both interpretations are possible. An IC analysis diagram will clearly reveal how the ambiguity rises:

ex. II—2



The structural approach tends to cut every constituent into two parts wherever possible, which is called **BINARY STRUCTURES**. This tendency has met difficulties, as when we try to analyse sequences like "*Peter, Paul and Chris*", and "*beautiful old house*". Furthermore, there are constituents whose component parts are separated by a string of one or more words, as the phrase "*look up*" in "*He looked the word up in the dictionary*". Constituents like this are called **discontinuous constituents**, and they present a real problem to binary cutting.

The structural approach is often criticised for its neglect of

meaning. Bloomfield, in his his great book *Language* (1933), has to admit that "In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speaker's world." He goes on to say that the speaker's world is extremely complex; it includes the external situations and the internal states of the speaker. Even if we could define his external situations, it is almost impossible for us to know definitely his state of mind, body, nerve system, etc. up to the moment of speaking. This amounts to giving up the study of meaning. Bloomfield indeed says "The statement of meanings is therefore the weak point in language study, and will remain so until human knowledge advances very far beyond its present state."

II.3.3 Behaviourist psychology in structuralism

Behaviourism holds that human beings cannot know anything they have not experienced. Behaviourism in linguistics holds that children learn language through a chain of "stimulus-response reinforcement", and the adults' use of language is also a process of "stimulus-response". Bloomfield and B.F. Skinner were strongly influenced by behaviourist psychology in their study of language. Skinner goes even further and holds the radical behaviourist view. He simply believes that language learning by human beings is very much like the conditioning of dogs by Pavlov, and that the reinforcement process is accompanied by a series of "rewards" and "punishments". The basic position of radical behaviourism is that since we cannot observe the internal states, we cannot know anything about them. Any statements we make about internal states or processes are necessarily meaningless. Each organism should be regarded

as a black box that cannot be opened for observation. (Skinner's theory is often called "black box" theory.) The only meaningful statements one can make about the organism concern what goes into it (stimuli) and what comes out of it (responses). Explanation for a particular set of behaviours is to be found in the pattern of rewards and punishments associated with those behaviours.

II.3.4 A comparison between traditional and structural grammars

To understand better the nature of both traditional grammar and structural grammar, it should be a good idea to compare their strengths and weaknesses. Most linguists would agree that traditional grammar has the following strong points: (1) It is the most widespread, influential and best understood method of discussing Indo-European languages. There are many grammars of many languages available; (2) It gives a fairly thorough and consistent analysis of the declarative sentence which is the most frequently used in both written and spoken discourse; (3) It contains a theory of reference by which the meaning of declarative sentences can be explained and to which other uses may be reduced; (4) It is the vehicle by means of which ordinary students and scholars have mastered many languages successfully for centuries.

Most people would also agree that traditional grammar has the following weaknesses: (1) It is normative or prescriptive, laying down rules for the use of language; its rules are not all well-founded, often considering usages that do not fit its rules "ungrammatical"; (2) It is based mainly on European languages; its categories are inadequate for the description of non-European languages; (3) It applies a mixture of semantic, morphological, and syntactic criteria without a fixed order, resulting in some cases of confusion in its anal-

ysis; (4) It assumes an *a priori* view of language, without stating its methodological presuppositions.

In a sense, structural grammar is a reaction against traditional grammar - it aims to overcome the weaknesses of the latter but contains weak points of its own. It is generally recognized that structural grammar has the following strong points: (1) It is descriptive, describing everything that is found in a language instead of laying down rules; (2) It is empirical: aiming at objectivity in the sense that all definitions and statements should be verifiable or refutable; (3) It examines all languages; the uniqueness of each language is recognized and done justice; (4) It describes even the smallest contrasts that underlie any construction or use of a language, not just those discoverable in some particular use. On the other hand, structural grammar has its obvious shortcomings: (1) Its aim is confined to the description of language; it does not explain why language operates the way it does; (2) It has produced almost no complete grammars comparable to any comprehensive traditional grammars; (3) It does not give an adequate treatment of meaning; (4) It fails to distinguish the human use and animal use of language.

The foregoing remarks do not apply to the work of every individual linguist; rather they are general features found in most of the works.

II.4 Transformational-Generative Grammar

II.4.1 Introduction

Chomsky's Transformational-Generative Grammar (TG Grammar) has been regarded by some linguists as a revolution in linguistics. However, Chomsky's theory has been very controversial:

some people follow him closely; some recognize its importance but disagree with him on many details; some totally reject the theory. Commenting on Chomsky's position, John Searle (1972) writes, "Chomsky's work is one of the most remarkable intellectual achievement of the present era, comparable in scope and coherence to the work of Keynes or Freud. It has done more than simply produce a revolution in linguistics; it has created a new discipline of generative grammar and is having a revolutionary effect on two other subjects, philosophy and psychology. Not the least of its merits is that it provides an extremely powerful tool even for those who disagree with many features of Chomsky's approach to language. In the long run, I believe his greatest contribution will be that he has taken a major step toward restoring the traditional conception of the dignity and uniqueness of man." Assuming a more objective tone, John Lyons (1970) says, "Right or wrong, Chomsky's theory of grammar is undoubtedly the most dynamic and influential; and no linguist who wishes to keep abreast of current developments in his subject can afford to ignore Chomsky's theoretical pronouncements. Every other 'school' of linguistics at the present time tends to define its position in relation to Chomsky's views on particular issues."

From its birth to the present day, TG grammar has seen four stages in its development. The first period is the period of logical structure of linguistic theory, from the fifties up to 1965. The aim of this period is to make linguistics a science. It is also known as the period of the first linguistic model. Chomsky's two major publications are *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory* (1955) and *Syntactic Structures* (1957). The second is the period of Standard Theory, from 1965 to 1970. The topical question is that semantics should be studied in a linguistic theory. Representative

works by Chomsky are *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965) and *Language and Mind* (1968). The third is the period of Extended Standard Theory, from 1970 to 1980. Now the discussion is focused on language universals and universal grammar. Important works for this period include “*Remarks on Nominalization*” (1970), *Reflections on Language* (1975), *Rules and Representations* (1980), and *Lectures on Government and Binding* (1981). A new period is emerging, which is called GB period, as the theory now centres around problems in government and binding. As we can see, there are too many aspects of Chomsky’s theory to be discussed and not all of them can be taken up within the space of a dozen pages. We shall have to content with a brief discussion of some important points in his first two models, found in *Syntactic Structures* and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*.

II.4.2 Chomsky’s innateness hypothesis

Chomsky is strongly against Bloomfield’s behaviourist psychology and empiricism and adopts cognitive psychology and rationalism. He believes that language is somewhat innate, otherwise there are important facts that can never be adequately explained.

Chomsky notices that children learn their native language very quickly and with little effort. It is said that children become fluent speakers of a language by the age of five. Considering the fact that the small children are not yet intellectually gifted in any other fields, this is surprisingly fast. The child never seems to make such conscious, painstaking effort in acquiring this mother tongue as in learning any other subject (such as mathematics and chemistry). What is important is that the first language acquisition invariably takes place without formal, explicit instruction. Mothers and other

boy caretakers do not provide anything like a teacher's work in a formal classroom. Furthermore, the linguistic data the child is exposed to is often of degenerate nature; the speech is full of imperfect structures, false starts, ungrammatical combinations. In other words, the linguistic input is limited and of poor quality, but the output is a perfect language system.

There are other facts which are puzzling if language is not innate. Children in the world learn their mother tongue in very different environments; however they follow more or less the same stages in their linguistic development: babbling stage, nonsense word stage, holophrastic stage, two-word stage, developing grammar, near-adult grammar, and full competence. During a limited period of time, from limited exposure to degenerate speech, the child learns the total grammar of the language. He produces and understands not only sentences he has heard but also sentences he has never heard before. What he learns, it seems, is a set of rules rather than individual sentences. All this goes to suggest that although babies are not born knowing a language (as they are born being able to see), they are born with a predisposition to develop a language in much the same way as they are born with a predisposition to learn to walk. The idea that human babies are somehow predisposed to acquire a language is called the **INNATENESS HYPOTHESIS**. This hypothesis states that there are aspects of linguistic organization that are basic to the human brain and that makes it possible for human infants to acquire linguistic competence in all its complexity with little or no instruction from family or friends.

Chomsky assumes that the child is born with what he calls **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEVICE (LAD)**, which probably consists of three elements: a hypothesis-making device, linguistic

universal and an evaluation procedure. By linguistic universals, Chomsky means the common features that all human languages have. This is an innate faculty for language in general, not just for any particular language. These universals must be just the common properties shared by all languages, no more no less. If one feature was missing, the child would find difficult to learn a language. If there were one feature too many (that is, a feature not shared by some languages), the child would find it impossible to acquire the languages that do not possess that feature. However, just what these common features are is still far from clear.

When the child is exposed to utterances of a particular language, he has the task to find out which language he is in contact with. He looks for regularities in the speech around him, then makes guesses as to the rules which underlie the patterns. He corrects his guesses on the basis of more linguistic data and make more hypotheses. To do all this, the child needs the hypothesis maker in LAD. However, there are times when two or more hypothesis cover the same set of linguistic facts, but one of them is simpler and better. In other words, there may be several grammars which can account for the data the child is exposed to. How is it possible that the child always chooses the better hypothesis or the better version of grammar? Chomsky suggests that to cope with the problem, the child must be equipped with an evaluation procedure which will allow him to choose between a number of possible grammars.

Chomsky's innateness hypothesis is by no means final or definite. His proposals are not necessarily all right or all wrong. He may be right in some aspects and wrong in others. Research in the area is still going on. One thing is certain, however; that is, the behaviourist view of language acquisition is no longer popular;

more and more people now agree that the child's mind is not a "blank slate" at birth; he is born with some capacity for language. Their disagreement now is on how strong and specific the "capacity" is.

II.4.3 Phrase structure rules

Chomsky believes that a grammar must generate all the grammatical sentences in a language and does not generate a single non-grammatical sentence. To him, a grammar is a system of finite rules generating infinite number of sentences; and these rules must meet the following requirements: (1) The rules must automatically generate sentences; (2) They must be expressed using symbols and formulas, not stated in words; (3) They must be stated precisely and clearly, leaving nothing to chance; (4) They should cover all linguistic facts, leaving nothing uncovered; (5) They can be repeatedly applied so as to generate infinite number of sentences.

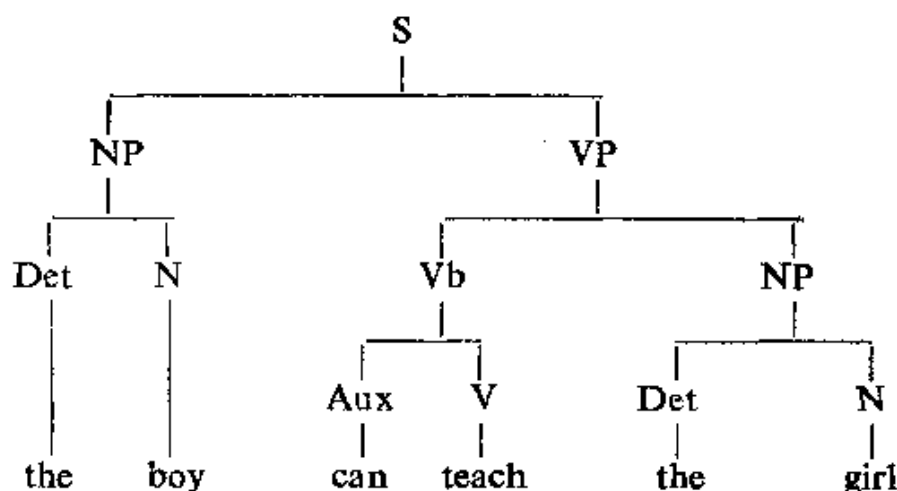
In the first period, Chomsky's grammar has three components: phrase structure rules, transformational rules and morphophonemic rules. Here is a brief presentation of phrase structure rules.

A simple set of phrase structure rules will contain the following items where the arrow sign is interpreted as "rewrite as":

- (1) $S \rightarrow NP + VP$
- (2) $NP \rightarrow Det + N$
- (3) $VP \rightarrow Vb + NP$
- (4) $Vb \rightarrow Aux + V$
- (5) $Det \rightarrow \{the, a, this, that \dots\}$
- (6) $N \rightarrow \{table, girl, boy, letter, car \dots\}$
- (7) $Aux \rightarrow \{will, can, might, would, should \dots\}$
- (8) $V \rightarrow \{post, repair, buy, teach, sit \dots\}$

Rule (1) means that a sentence can be rewritten as a noun phrase plus

a verb phrase, and Rule (2) means that a noun phrase can be rewritten as a determiner plus a noun. Rule (3) means that a verb can take the form of an auxiliary plus a verb, and so on. In generating a sentence from these rules, we start from the symbol S, rewriting it as a string of symbols NP + VP. According to Rules (2) and (3), we rewrite NP as a string of Det + N, and VP as a string of Vb + NP, and so on until all the items are replaced by the lexical items in the braces. This set of rules can generate simple sentences like "*The boy can teach the girl*", "*That boy would repair the car*". The process of generation can be shown by the following tree diagram:



Obviously, this set of rules can only generate a small number of very simple sentences. To produce complex sentences, we need to extend these rules to cover more structures and more lexical categories. For example, we can make Rule (2) cover pronouns and proper nouns as well:

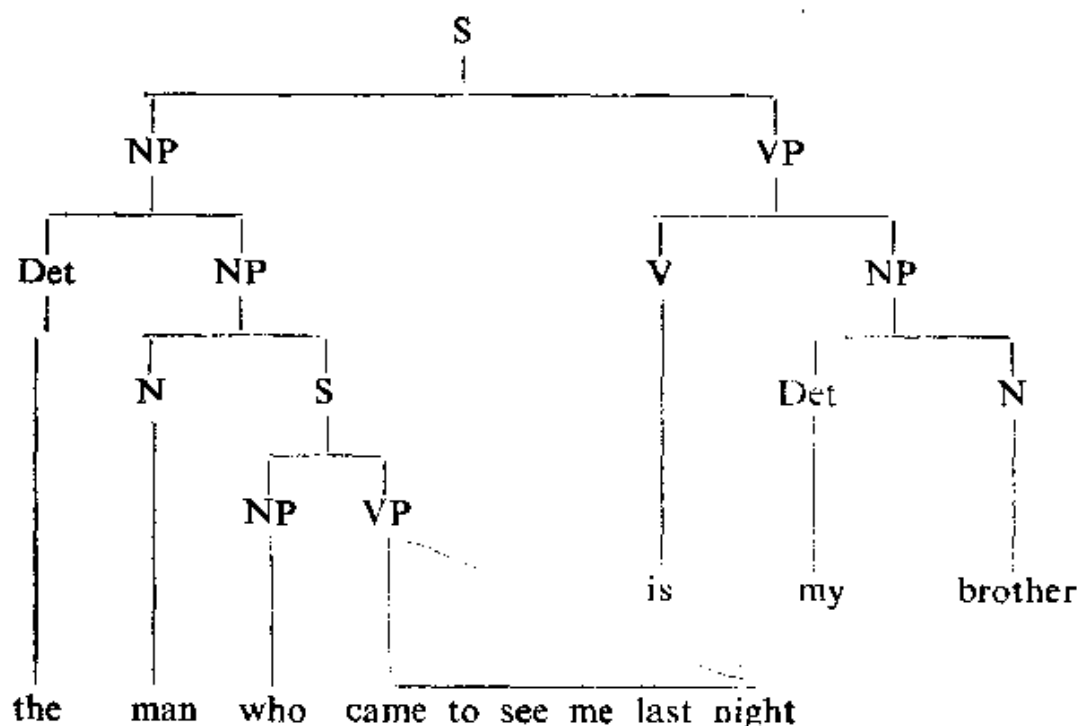
$$\text{NP} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{pronoun} \\ \text{proper noun} \\ \text{Det} + \text{N} \end{array} \right\}$$

Pronoun $\rightarrow \{\text{he, she, you, we, they, it, I}\}$

Proper noun $\rightarrow \{\text{John, Jane, Stephen, Robert...}\}$

$NP \rightarrow Det + NP \div S$

which can generate sentences like "*The man who came to see me last night is my brother*".



Phrase structure rules have obvious limitations. The set of rules we have suggested can still produce only fairly simple, declarative sentences. Simple declarative sentences are called **KERNEL SENTENCES**. What these rules generate are abstract syntactic representations of sentences; they are called the **DEEP STRUCTURE**, and they are not the kind of sentences we ordinarily say. We need to change them into sentences we actually say, which are called **SURFACE STRUCTURE**. To effect this change, we need transformational rules.

II.4.4 Transformational rules

TRANSFORMATIONAL RULES are those rules which relate or transform the deep structure of a sentence into the surface structure.

A transformational rule consists of a sequence of symbols which is rewritten as another sequence according to certain convention. One of the transformational rule is one which converts active sentences into passive sentences; that is, **PASSIVE TRANSFORMATION**.

$$\text{NP1} - \text{Aux} - \text{V} - \text{NP2} \implies \text{NP2} - \text{Aux} + \text{be} + \text{en} - \text{V} - \text{by} + \text{NP1}$$

Without going into detail, the rule converts active sentences like "*John loves Mary*" and "*Alice cut the flowers*" into "*Mary is loved by John*" and "*The flowers were cut by Alice*" respectively.

As an illustration, we discuss in some detail the **YES/NO QUESTION TRANSFORMATION**. First we expand our rules in II. 4.3 to include more facts. For example, the symbol **Aux** should contain tense element (t) and a modal verb (M), so a sentence (S) can be represented by $\text{NP} + \text{t} + \text{M} + \text{Vt} + \text{NP}$, where **Vt** stands for a transitive verb. When a kind of transformation is to happen to a sentence, we indicate it by a symbol, **Q** for question transformation, **Neg** for negative transformation, **Emph** for emphasis transformation, and so on. When these transformations can be optional, they are indicated like this:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{(Emph)} \\ \text{S} \rightarrow \text{NP} + \text{t} + \text{M} + \text{Vt} + \text{NP} \\ \text{(Q) (Neg)} \end{array}$$

When the transformation is obligatory, we indicate both the transformation and the rule. Take the question transformation for example:

$$\text{Q NP} + \text{t} + \text{M} + \text{Vt} + \text{NP} \implies \text{t} + \text{M} + \text{NP} + \text{Vt} + \text{NP}$$

The transformation requires that whatever choices are made in the auxiliary, the tense and whichever modal element immediately follows it must be moved to the beginning of the string. If the main

verb is headed by the verb “be” (as in “*He is tall*”), then “be” will be ordered to move to the beginning of the string. Other verbs will not move with the tense. Here are the kinds of change we often see:

- Q NP t M Vt NP
 (“May I read your paper?”)
 Q NP t have -en Vt NP
 (“Have you finished your paper?”)
 Q NP t be -ing Vt NP
 (“Are you reading your paper?”)
 Q NP t be Adj
 (“Is she tall?”)
 Q NP t Vt NP
 (“Did you finish your paper?”)

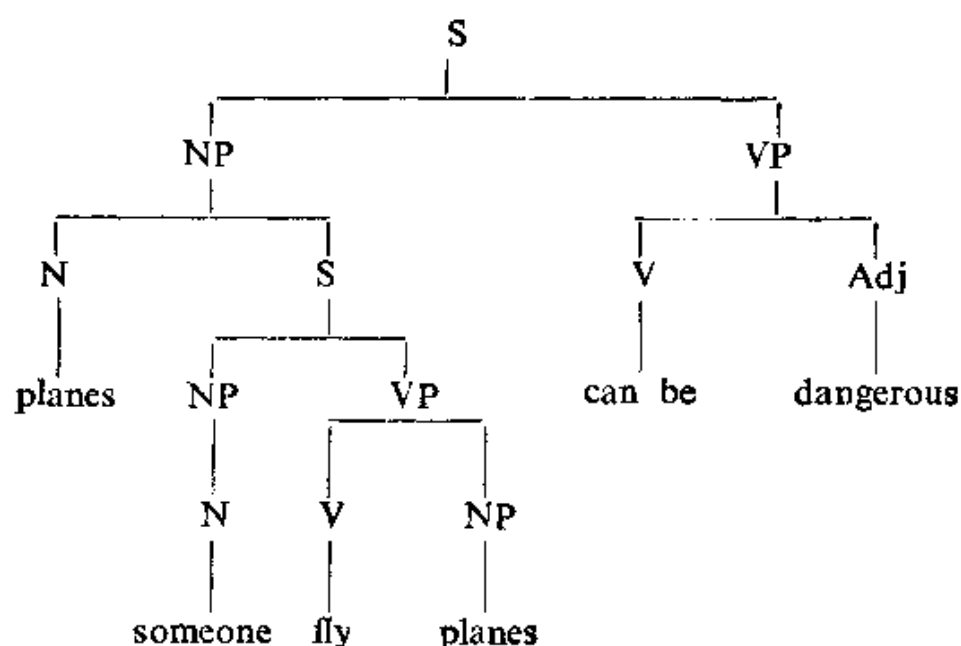
In the case of a string with no auxiliary elements other than tense, the tense is ordered to move alone. However, because English does not allow this kind of transformation: *He studied linguistics* $\Rightarrow$ *Studied he linguistics?* the word “do” is used as a tense carrier so that we get “*Did he study...*” or “*Does she study...?*”. This is called the DO INSERTION TRANSFORMATION.

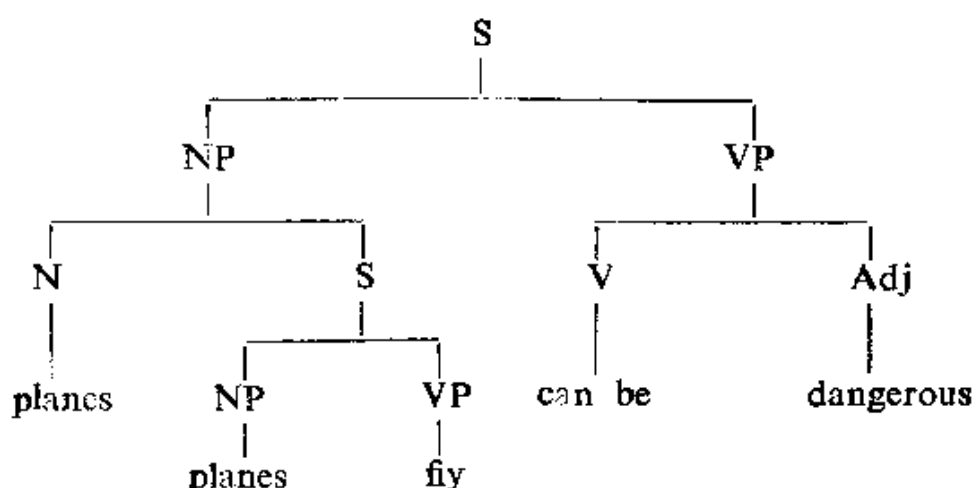
Now we can sum up the Yes/No Question Transformation. We let X stand for anything that comes before the elements to be transformed and Y stand for anything that comes after the elements to be transformed, we get the following rules:

$$Q \ X \left\{ \begin{array}{l} t \ M \\ t \ have \\ t \ be \\ t \end{array} \right\} Y \Rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} t \ M \\ t \ have \\ t \ be \\ t \end{array} \right\} X \ Y$$

and the **Do Insertion Rule**.

From the simple illustration above, we can see that transformational rules can change the deep structure into the surface structure by rearranging, deleting and inserting elements into the phrase structure. When a choice of rules is possible, the transformational rules are ordered so that some rules must be applied before others in order to properly relate the deep structure to the surface structure. The same surface structure may have come from two different deep structures; different sets of transformations have made them assume the same string. The sentence "*Flying planes can be dangerous*" is syntactically ambiguous. It can mean either that "If you fly planes you are engaged in a dangerous activity" or that "Planes that are flying are dangerous objects". This is because their deep structures are different. In the first case, "*planes*" is related to an underlying string in which it is object of the verb "*fly*"; in the second case, "*flying planes*" is related to an underlying string in which "*planes*" is the subject of the verb "*fly*". Their representations are entirely different:





II.4.5 A comparison between structural grammar and TG grammar

We can compare structural grammar and TG grammar along the following dimensions. First, they have different views on the nature of language. Bloomfield defines language as a set of utterances and a set of "lexical and grammatical habits". Chomsky defines language as a set of rules or principles. Which view is correct? As we said earlier, language cannot be a set of utterances, for the number of possible utterances in a language is infinite. Judging from the creativity of language, language must be a finite number of rules which can generate an infinite number of sentences. Secondly, the two grammars have different aims in linguistics. For structural grammar, the aim of linguistics is to describe one or a set of languages; such a description is often evaluated in terms of the use to which it is going to be put. For Chomsky, the aim of linguistics is to produce a generative grammar which captures the tacit knowledge of the native speaker of his language. This concerns the question of learning theory and the question of linguistic universals. Thirdly, the two grammars make use of different types of data in their analysis. The structuralists only make use of naturally occurring

utterances, observed and observable. They are not allowed to consult the informant whether a sentence is grammatical or not. In contrast, Chomsky and his followers are interested in any data that can reveal the native speaker's tacit knowledge. They seldom use what native speakers actually say; they rely on their intuition. Fourthly, the two grammars have different methodology. The structuralists' methodology is essentially inductive. Bloomfield says, "The only useful generalizations about language are inductive generalizations." Opposite to this is the hypothesis-deductive methodology. Chomsky says that this methodology operates at two levels: (a) the linguist formulates a hypothesis about language structure—a general linguistic theory; this is tested by grammars for particular languages, and (b) each such grammar is a hypothesis on the general linguistic theory. Finally, the two grammars view language learning differently. The structuralists follow empiricism in philosophy and behaviourism in psychology. Chomsky follows rationalism in philosophy and mentalism in psychology.

II.5 The London School

II.5.1 Introduction

The man who turned linguistics proper into a recognized, independent subject in Britain is J.R. Firth (1890—1960). Firth was offered the Chair of General Linguistics at the University of London in 1944, the first chair of its kind in Britain. Because of his association with the University of London, the school of linguistics he represented has become to be known as the LONDON SCHOOL.

Firth was not alone; he was influenced by the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884—1942) when he participated in his

seminars at the University of London. In turn he influenced the well-known linguist M.A.K. Halliday, who finished his Ph.D thesis under the supervision of Firth. The three men all stressed the importance of context of situation and the system aspect of language. Thus, the London School linguistics is also known by the names of SYSTEMIC LINGUISTICS and FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS. We shall discuss here some ideas by Malinowski and Firth and give a more detailed presentation of Halliday's theory.

II.5.2 Malinowski's theory of meaning

Malinowski was professor of anthropology at the London School of Economics from 1927 onwards. He did field work in the primitive culture of the Trobriand Island off eastern New Guinea. His works include *The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages* (1923) and *Coral Garden and Their Magic* (1935).

Malinowski says that language is "to be regarded as a mode of action, rather than as a counterpart of thought". According to him, the meaning of an utterance does not come from the ideas of the words comprising it but from its relation to the situational context in which the utterance occurs. He (1923) writes, "when we pass from a modern civilized language ... to a primitive tongue, ... — there it should be clear at once that conception of meaning as contained in an utterance is false and futile...; utterances and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensable for the understanding of the words." There is no way to characterize the meaning of utterances on the basis of internal considerations about the language alone. The meaning of spoken utterances could always be determined by the context of situation. Malinowski distinguishes three types of context of situation: (1) situations in which speech interrelates with bodily activity;

(2) narrative situations; (3) situations in which speech is used to fill a speech vacuum — “phatic communion”.

By the first type of situation Malinowski means that the meaning of a word is not given by the physical properties of its referent, but by its function. When a savage learns the meaning of a word, he says, the process is not accompanied by explanation but by learning to handle it. Likewise, a verb, a word for an action, receives its meaning through an active participation in this action. For the second type of situation, he further distinguishes “the situation of the moment of narration” and “the situation referred to by the narrative”. The first case is “made up of the respective social, intellectual and emotional attitudes of those present”, and the second case derives its meaning from the context referred to (as in a fairy tale). The third type of situation refers to cases of “language used in free, aimless, social intercourse”. The meaning of utterances in this case is just the “atmosphere of sociability and ... the fact of the personal communion of these people”.

II.5.3 Firth's theory of meaning

Firth's works include *Papers in Linguistics* (1957) and *The Tongues of Men and Speech* (1964).

Firth holds that meaning is use. He defines meaning as the relationship between an element at any level and its context on that level. The meaning of any sentence consists of the following five parts: (1) the relationship of each phoneme to its phonetic context; (2) the relationship of each lexical item to the others in the sentence; (3) the morphological relations of each word; (4) the sentence type of which the given sentence is an example; (5) the relationship of the sentence to its context of situation. Firth did not do much work

with the first four elements; his study focused on the context of situation as did Malinowski.

Firth defines context of situation as including the entire cultural setting of speech and the personal history of the participants rather than as simply the context of human activity going on at the moment. Recognizing that sentences are infinitely various, he uses the notion of "typical context of situation", so that **some** generalizations can be made about it. By a typical context of situation, he means that social situations determine the social roles participants are obliged to play; since the total number of roles an individual must play is finite, the number of typical contexts of situation he will encounter in life is also finite. For this reason he says "Conversation is much more of a roughly prescribed ritual than most people think. Once someone speaks to you, you are in a relatively determined context and you are not free just to say what you please." Semantics then is defined as the classification of utterances of a language into the typical contexts of situation for which they might be appropriate.

The situational approach requires that we analyze the typical speech situation as follows:

1. Interior relations of the text itself
 - (a) Syntagmatic relations between elements of structure considered at the various levels of analysis;
 - (b) Paradigmatic relations of terms or units that commute within systems to give values to the elements of structure.
2. Interior relations within the context of situation
 - (a) The text in relation to the nonverbal constituents, with its total effective or creative result;

- (b) Analytic relations between “bits” and “pieces” of the text (words, parts of words, phrases) and special constituents within the situation (items, objects, persons, personalities, events).

Firth discussed meaning at various levels. For example, at the phonetic level, sounds have function by virtue of the place in which they occur and the contrast they show with other sounds that could occur in the same place. At the lexical level, the meaning of words is not only determined by the usual referential sense, but also by collocation or the “company a word keeps”. At the situational level, he recognizes the difficulty in determining all the factors that make up a situation, but he lists a model as illustrated in 8.2.4.

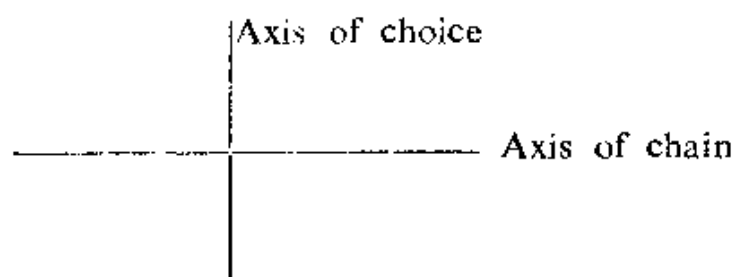
II.5.4 Halliday's systemic grammar

Halliday studied Chinese in Peking University under Lo Changpei from 1947—49, and then in Lingnan University under Wang Li from 1949 to 1950. He finished his Ph. D thesis in 1955 entitled *The Language of the Chinese Secret History of the Mongols*. In the following ten years he taught linguistics in Oxford University and Edinburgh University. From 1965—70, he was professor of linguistics in London University. He was influenced by Firth, the Prague School and Hjelmslev. From the 1950s to 1970s, he developed his systemic grammar and from 1970 onwards, he worked on the functional aspect of grammar. His works include *Categories of the Theory of Grammar* (1961), *Explorations in the Functions of Language* (1973) and *Language as Social Semiotics* (1975), and others.

Halliday's systemic linguistics is different from other schools in the following aspects: (1) It attaches great importance to the

sociological aspects of language; (2) It views language as a form of "doing" rather than as a form of "knowing". It distinguishes linguistic behaviour potential from actual linguistic behaviour; (3) It explains a number of aspects of language in terms of cline (such as ungrammatical - more unusual - less unusual - less usual - grammatical); (4) It has as its central category the category of the system. In systemic grammar, the notion of system is made a central explanatory principle, the whole of language being conceived as a "system of systems". Systemic grammar is concerned with establishing a network of systems of relationships, which account for all the semantically relevant choices in the language as a whole.

. The system of a language is made up of many systems. On a very general level, there is the chain system and the choice system:



The dimension along which the utterance sequence occurs is the axis of chain; the basic patterns along the vertical line form the axis of choice. The axis of chain represents syntagmatic relations; the axis of choice represents paradigmatic relations. Associated with the axis of choice is the concept of contrast. If it were not for its contrasts, language would not be able to work at all. The axis of chain deals with the surface aspects of grammar, such as sentence structures, linguistic units, and their ranks (sentence, clause, group, word, morpheme). The axis of choice deals with the meaning aspects of grammar, such as system and delicacy.

Systems are lists of choices which are available in the grammar of a language. The number system in English, for example, contains two choices: singular and plural. The person system offers three choices: first person, second person, and third person. Here are some more examples:

ex. II—3

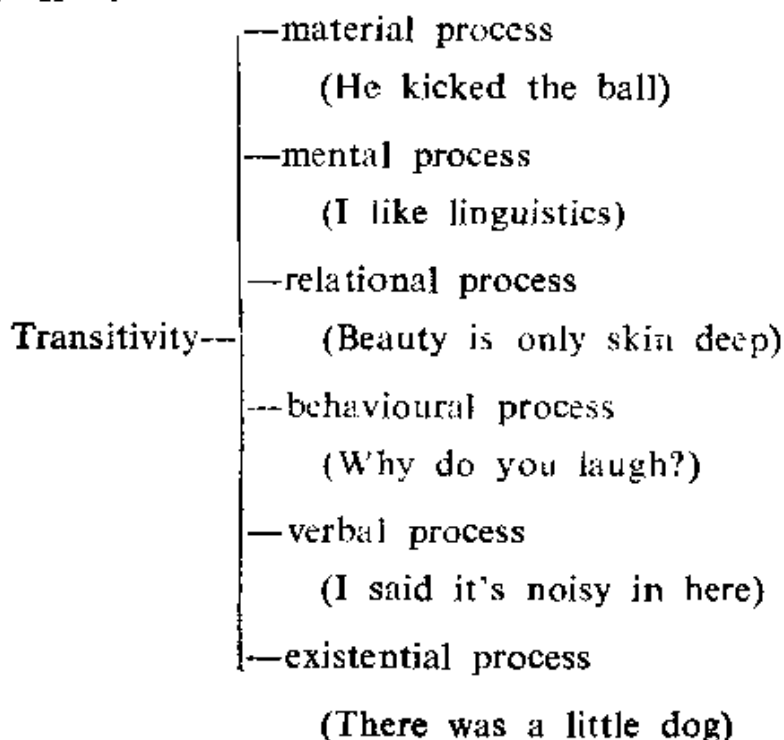
gender —	{	masculine
	{	feminine
	{	neuter
tense —	{	past
	{	present
	{	future
mood —	{	declarative
	{	interrogative
	{	imperative

The items in a system are called **terms** or **options**. The terms of a particular system have something in common. They belong to the same area of meaning. Singular and plural are distinct; but they both have to do with number. All systems have three essential characteristics: (1) The terms in a system are mutually exclusive; the selection of one rules out the selection of any of the others; (2) A system is finite; (3) The meaning of each term in a system depends on the meaning of the other terms in the same system.

What is delicacy? **DELICACY** refers to the dimension which recognises increasing depth of detail. In our analysis, we take a general area of meaning and gradually break it down into smaller and smaller

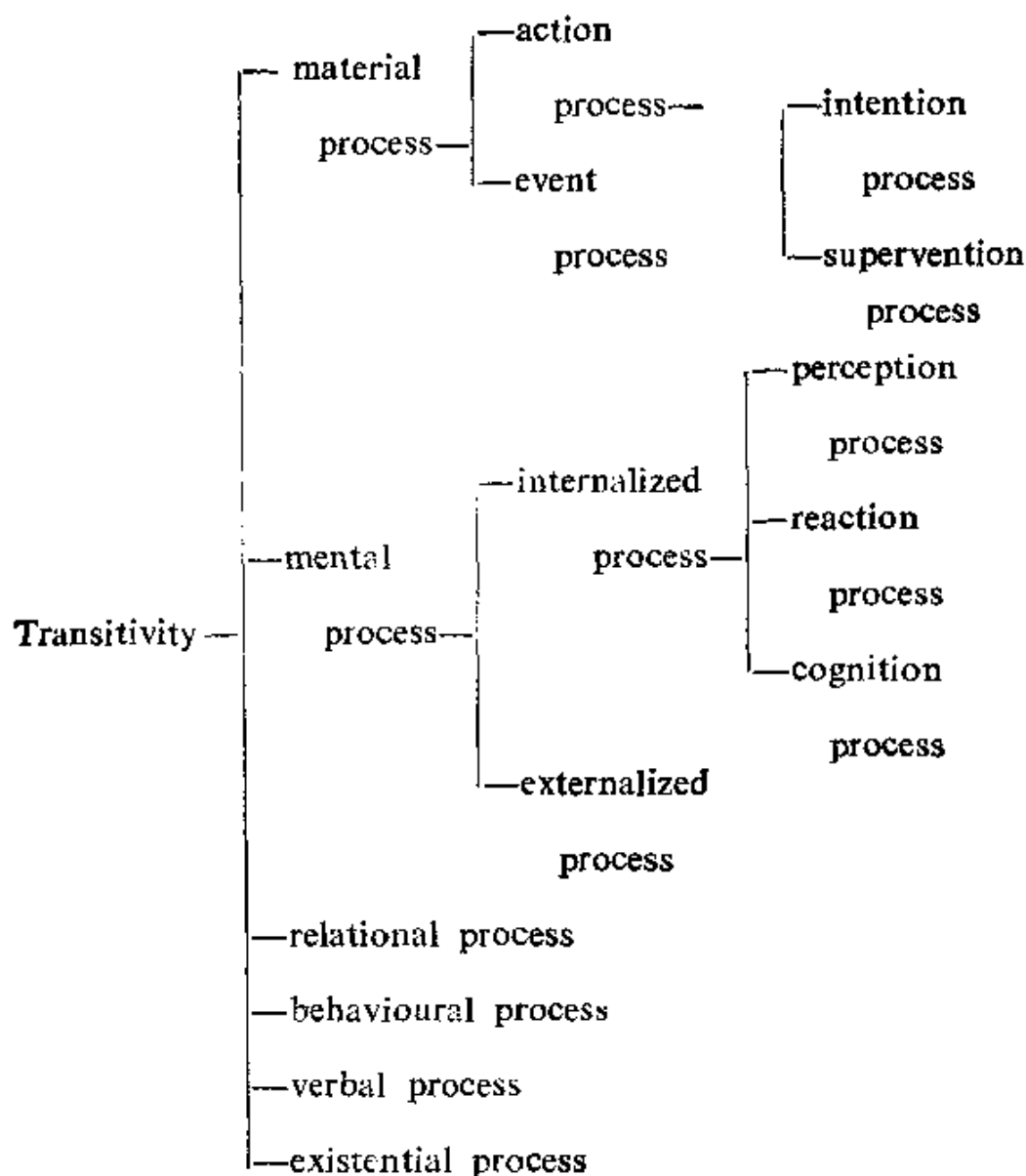
sub-areas. In each stage, we are gradually making finer and finer distinctions in meaning. We can arrange systems on a scale according to the fineness of the distinction. This scale is called **SCALE OF DELICACY**. We now use the transitivity system in English to illustrate how it works. In English we make choices between different types of process, participants, circumstances, roles, numbers; they are known collectively as the transitivity choices. We can first divide the choices into six kinds:

ex. II—4



Then we distinguish two types of material process: action process (*He kicked the ball*) and event process (*A stream flows through the village*). Then within action processes, there are intention process and supervision process. Within mental processes, there is first the distinction between internalized process (*I like it*) and externalized process (*It puzzles me*), and so on, until we get a full scale of transitivity:

ex. II—5



Delicacy is not just a matter of the fineness of semantic distinctions; it is also a matter of dependency. The systems to the right depend on those to the left.

There are entry conditions for systems: (1) The terms in a system must have a common area of meaning; (2) The terms must have a common grammatical environment; (3) The terms must indicate the right kind of units applicable to the system (that is, if it is a clause or a phrase that is needed); (4) Systems often provide entry conditions for each other. In many cases it is possible to make a choice from a system only if certain other choices from other systems have been made.

II.5.5 Halliday's functional grammar

Halliday believes that language is what it is because it has to serve certain functions. In other words, social demands on language has helped to shape its structure. Halliday interprets language development from a functional point of view and formulates a functional theory of language.

Halliday views language development in children "as the mastery of linguistic functions". "Learning a language is learning how to mean." From his direct experience, the child is "subconsciously aware that language has many functions that affect him personally. Language is, for the child, a rich and adaptable instrument for the realization of his intentions; there is hardly any limit to what he can do with it." Halliday proposes the following child's model of language; (1) the **INSTRUMENTAL** function: language is used as means of getting things done; (2) the **REGULATORY** function: language is used to regulate the behaviour of others; (3) the **INTERACTIONAL** function: language is used to get along with other people; (4) the **PERSONAL** function: language is used to identify and express the self (as in "*Here I come*"); (5) the **HEURISTIC** function: language is used to explore the world around and

inside the child; (6) the IMAGINATIVE function: language is used to create a world of one's own (as in "*Let us pretend that...*"); (7) the INFORMATIVE function: language is used to communicate information.

As the child grows, his language also changes in terms of function. The adult's language becomes much more complex and it has to serve many more functions. However, the original functional range of the child's language is gradually reduced to a set of highly coded and abstract functions. They are called macro-functions. These macro-functions reflect the multiplicity of social uses of language by the adult. Language now provides the mechanisms for different functions to be combined in one utterance in the way the adult desires. Halliday recognizes three macrofunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

The IDEATIONAL function is to convey new information, to communicate a content that is unknown to the hearer. This function is present in all language uses. This is because whatever specific use one is making of language he has to refer to categories of his experience of the world. The ideational function is a meaning potential. The whole of the transitivity system, for example, is part of the ideational component. In this respect, this function not only specifies the available options in meaning but also determines the nature of their structural realizations (i.e. whether to choose the material process or the mental process; whether to choose the action process or the event process; and so on).

The INTERPERSONAL function embodies all uses of language to express social and personal relations. This includes the various ways the speaker enters a speech situation and performs a speech act. This function is realized by mood and modality. MOOD

shows what role the speaker selects in the speech situation and what role he assigns to the addressee. If the speaker selects the imperative mood, he assumes the role of one giving commands and puts the addressee in the role of one expected to obey orders. MODALITY specifies if the speaker is expressing his judgment or making a prediction (i.e. "*It will rain tomorrow.*").

The TEXTUAL function refers to the fact that language has mechanisms to make any stretch of spoken or written discourse into a coherent and unified text and make a living message different from a random list of sentences. If we compare the following two sets of sentences:

ex. II-6

1. John saw a handbag in a field. John walked across a field and picked up a handbag. John took a handbag to the Police Station and John handed in a handbag as lost property. When John had handed in a handbag as lost property, John went home.
2. John saw a handbag in a field. He walked across the field and picked up the handbag. He took the handbag to the Police Station and handed it in as lost property. When he had done this, he went home.

we find that the second set of sentences reads much more like a coherent text than the first, though their ideational and interpersonal functions are exactly the same. The textual function can also highlight certain parts of the text. For example, in "*Such books I never read, but good poetry I do enjoy reading*", "*such books*" and "*good poetry*" are highlighted. Attention is drawn to them because they have been moved before their subject and predicator.

According to Halliday, a sentence is the simultaneous realiza-

tion of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. However, we cannot point to one segment of the sentence as conveying one type of meaning and another segment conveying another type, because they are not expressed in discrete fashion. Halliday would analyse the three functions of a sentence like this:

ex. II—7

This house was built by John Smith

IDEATIONAL

material:	Goal:	Material:	Actor:
action:	affected	action	animate
Passive			

INTERPERSONAL

	Mood	Residue
declarative	Subject	Fin. Predi- Adjunct cator

TEXTUAL

Thematic, unmarked	Theme	Rheme
Information, unmarked	Given	New

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INDEX

(with Chinese translation)

A

abbreviation	缩写(词), 略语	10.2.4
accent	重音(符)	11.2.1
accusative (case)	宾格	7.3.3, 7.4.3
achievement test	成绩测试	1.5.2
acoustic phonetics	声学语音学	3.1.3
acquisition	(语言)习得	14.1.1
acronym	缩略词	10.2.5
action process	动作过程	II.5.4, II.5.5
active articulator	主动发音器官	3.2.3.3
actualized language	现实化的语言	2.2.4
addition	添加	10.3.2
adjacency pair	邻近配对, 相邻语对	15.4.1
adjective	形容词	4.4.2, 5.2.3, 7.1.3, 7.4.2, 7.4.4
adjective phrase	形容词短语	7.2.3.1
adverb	副词	4.4.2.2, 6.2.3
adverbial	状语	7.3.4, II.2.3
adverbial clause	状语从句	7.6.3
adverbial conjunction	状词性连词	6.2.3.2
affective meaning	情感意义	8.3.2
affix	词缀	5.1.1, 5.1.2.2, 5.3
affricate	塞擦音	3.3.2
agent	施事, 施动者	7.3.1
agglutinative language	粘着语	12.2.4
Algonkian family	阿尔冈基亚语系	12.1.3.3
alliteration	头韵	16.2.1
allomorph	语/词素变体	5.2.4, 5.4.2

allophone	音位变体	3.5.2, 4.1, 4.2.5
allophonic transcription	音位变体音标	3.5.2
alphabetic writing	拼音文字	2.2.1, 9.3.2
alveolar	齿龈音	3.3.1, 3.3.2, 12.2.2
alveolar nasal	齿龈鼻音	5.4.1
American structuralism	美国结构主义	11.3
analytic language	分析型语言	12.2.4
analogical creation	类推造字	10.2.8
animate	有生命的	7.4.2
anthropological linguistics	人类语言学	2.4.5
antonymy	反义性	8.4.2
applied linguistics	应用语言学	2.4.1, 1.1
apposition	同位(语)	16.2.3
appropriateness	适宜(性), 得体(性)	1.2.5
aptitude test	素质测试	15.2
arbitrary	任意的	1.2, 1.3.1
archiphoneme	原始音位	4.3.1
argument	中项, 中词	8.5.2
article	冠词	6.2.3, 7.4.2
articulator	发音器官	3.2.3.3
articulatory phonetics	发音语言学	3.1.1
aspect	体, 貌	7.4
aspirated plosives	吐气爆发音	3.5.1, 12.2.2
aspiration	送气, 吐气	4.2.5, 4.3, 1.12.2
assertive	陈述	15.3.2
assimilation	同化(作用)	5.4.1, 10.3.4
associative meaning	联想意义	8.3.2
associative relation	联想关系	7.1.2
assonance	准押韵, 半谐音	16.2.1
Athabaskan family	阿萨巴斯卡语系	12.1.3.3
auditory phonetics	听觉语音学	3.1.1
automatic translation	自动翻译	2.4.5
auxiliary verb	助动词	6.2.3
axis of chain	链状轴	11.5.4
axis of choice	选择轴	11.5.4

B

back formation	逆构词,反成法	10.2.7
behaviourism	行为主义	8.2.5
behavioural process	行为过程	II.5.4
Beneficiary	受益者	7.3.1
bilabial (sound)	双唇音	3.3, 12.2.2, II.2
bilabial nasal	双唇鼻音	5.4.1
bilabiality	双唇性	4.3
bilateral opposition	双边对立	II.2.2
bilingualism	双语制	14.2.2.5
binary analysis	二分法	7.3.2
binary structure	双成分结构	II.3.2
binding	制约	II.4.1
Black English	黑人英语	11.2.3.3
blending	混成法	10.2.3, 10.4.2
borrowing	借用,借词	10.2.9
bound morpheme	粘着语素	5.3.1
bound root morpheme	粘着词根语素	5.3.2
bracketing	括号法	7.2.2
Broad Romic	宽式罗密克音标	3.5.2
broad transcription	宽式音标	3.5.2
broadening	词义扩大	10.5.1

C

caesura	(行内)休止	16.2.1
cardinal vowel	基本元音	3.4.1
case	格	5.1.1, 7.4
case label	格标记	7.3.3
category	范畴	7.4
central approximant	中央近似音	3.3.3
central articulator	中央发音器官	3.3.3
centre	中心(词)	7.2.3
chain relation	链状关系	7.1.1
choice relation	选择关系	7.1.2

circumstance	环境因素	II.5.4
class	类,类别	5.1.1, 7.3.4
class dialect	阶级方言	11.2.3
clause	分句,从句,小句	6.2.1.3, 7.2.1, 7.5
clipping	截短(法)	10.2.4
closed class word	封闭类词	6.2.3.3
closed syllable	闭音节	4.4.1
closed system	封闭系统	6.2.3.3
cluster	音丛	4.4.1
coda	结尾(音节),符尾	4.4
code	语码,信码	6.2.3.4
code switching	语码转换,换码	14.3.5
coherence	相关,关联	15.3.1
cohyponym	同下义词	8.4.3
collocate	搭配	6.4
collocation	组配,搭配	6.4
collocative meaning	搭配意义	8.3.2
command	指令	7.5.3
commissive	承诺的	15.3.2
common core	共核(语言)	13.3.3.2
communicative competence	交际能力	I.2.5, I.3.3.3, I.3.3.4
communicative dynamism	交际性动力	II.2.3
communicative syllabus	交际教学大纲	I.2.5, I.3.3.4
communicative test	交际性测试	I.5.4.2
communication	交际	1.3.6, 2.3
communication code	交际信码	14.3.4
communication system	交际系统	1.3.6
competence	语言能力	2.2.5, 2.2.6, I.2.5
complement	补语	7.3.2, 7.3.4
complementarity	互补性	8.4.2.1
complementary distribution	互补分布	4.2.3, 4.2.4, 4.4.1, 5.4.2
complex	复杂结构结合体	7.5.3
complex preposition	复杂前置词,复杂介词	6.2.3.3
componential analysis	成分分析	8.5.1
compound	复合词,复合句	4.4.2.1, 5.1.2.1, 5.3.1, 7.5.3

compound bilingualism	复合双语制	14.2.2.5
compounding	复合构词法	10.2.2
computational linguistics	计算语言学	2.4.5
concept	概念	8.2.2
conceptual meaning	概念意义	8.3.2
concord	一致(关系)	7.4.4
confirmation	确认, 认可	7.5.3
conjoining	连接	7.6.1
conjugate	(动词)词形变化	6.3.1
conjunction	连词	6.2.3
conjunctive adverb	连接副词	6.2.3.2
connective construction	关联结构	7.2.3.2
connotative meaning	内涵意义	5.3.2
consistency	一贯性, 一致性	2.1
consonance	辅韵	16.2.1
consonant	辅音	3.2.2, 3.3, 4.2.3
consonant cluster	辅音音丛, 辅音连缀	4.2.5, 4.4.1
constituent	成分	6.2.2.1, 7.2, 7.5.3
construct	结构体, 结构成分	7.2.1
construct validity	编制效度	1.5.3.1
construction	结构(体)	7.2
content validity	内容效度	1.5.3.1
context	语境, 上下文	8.2.4
context of situation	情景语境	8.2.4, 15.1, 15.2, II.5.1, II.5.2
contextual category	语境范畴	11.2.6
contextualism	语境理论	8.2.4
contracted form	紧缩形式	6.2.1.1
contrastive analysis	对比分析	1.4.3, 1.4.4
contrastive feature	对立特征, 对立成分	II.2.2
conversational implicature	会话含意	15.5.2
co-occurrence	同现	6.4, 7.1.3
cooperative principle	配合原则	15.5
coordinate construction	并列结构	7.2.4
coordinating adjective	并列形容词	6.4.1.2
coordinating conjunction	并列连词	6.2.3.2
coordinating subject	并列主语	6.2.2.2

co-reference	互参, 互见	8.5.4
countability	可数性	7.4
cultural transmission	文化传递	1.3.5
cultural universal	文化普遍现象	13.3.1
culture	文化	13
curriculum	教学大纲	1.3.1
Cyrillic alphabet	基里尔字母	9.2.3

D

dative (case)	与格	7.3.3, 7.4.3
declarative	陈述句	7.5.3, 15.3.2, II.5.5
deep structure	深层结构	I.2.3, II.4.3
definiteness	有定性	5.5.4
deictic	指示(成分)	15.2
delicacy	精密阶	II.5.4
demonstrative	指示词	6.2.3.2
demonstrative pronoun	指示代词	4.4.2.2
dental	齿音	3.3.1, 3.3.2
derivation	派生(法)	5.1.2.2
derivational	派生的, 构词的	5.3.3, 14.4.1
derivational morphology	派生形态学	5.1
descriptive	描写的	2.2.2
descriptive grammar	描写语法	14.4.2
design feature	结构特征	1.3
determiner	限定词, 限定成分	6.2.3.2, 7.1.3
deviation	偏离	16.3.1
diachronic	历时的	2.2.3, II.1.4
diachronic linguistics	历时语言学	11.2.2, 12.2, II.1.4
diachrony	历时性	II.1.4
diacritic	附加符号, 变音符	3.5.1
diagnostic test	诊断测试	I.5.2
dialect	方言	11.2, 14.3.2
dialectal variety	方言变体	11.2.6
dialectology	方言学	11.2.1
diatypic variety	类型变体	11.3
diction	用语	16.2.2

dictionary	词典	14.4
diglossia	双语体现象	14.2.3
diphthong	二合元音, 双元音	3.4.2, 4.4.1
direct object	直接宾语	7.3.3, II.2.3
directive	指令(的)	1.4.2, 15.3.2
discourse	话语	11.4, 15.2, 16.1, I.1.3, 3.3, II.2.3, II.5.5
discourse analysis	话语分析, 语篇分析	7.7
discrete point test	分立型测试	I.5.4.1
displacement	移位	1.3.4
dissimilation	异化(作用)	5.4.1, 10.3.5
distinctive feature	区别性特征	4.3, II.2.1, II.2.2
distinctive sound	区别性语音	4.1, II.2.2
distribution	分布	II.3.2
do insertion rule	do 添加规则	II.4.4
domain	范围, 领域	14.3.3
double comparative	双重比较	10.4.2
Dravidian family	达罗毗荼语系, 德拉维达语系	12.1.3.3, 12.2.1
dual	双数	7.4.1
duality	二重性	1.3.2

E

economy	经济性, 简洁性	2.1
ejaculation	喊叫	1.4.5
elaborate code	复杂语码	14.3.4
ellipsis	省略(法)	7.7.2
embedding	嵌入的	7.6.2
emphasis transformation	强调转换	II.4.4
empirical validity	经验效度	I.5.3.1
enjambement	跨行	16.2.1
entailment	蕴涵	8.4.5.1
entry condition	入列条件	II.5.4
equipollent opposition	均等对立	II.2.2
error analysis	错误分析	I.4
evaluation	评估	1.3.2.3

event process	事件过程	II.5.4, II.5.5
evolutionary linguistics	演变语言学	II.1.4
evocative	表情的	1.4.6
exhaustiveness	穷尽性	2.1
existential process	存在过程	II.5.4
expressive	表达的	1.4.5, 1.4.6, 15.3.2
external authority	外部权威	14.1.2

F

face validity	卷面效度	5.3.1
facilitation	便利, 促进	I.4.4.1
fall-rise tone	降升调	4.4.4
falling tone	降调	4.4.4
female speech	女性言语	11.2.3.1
feminine	阴性	7.4.2
field of discourse	(话)语范围	11.3.1
finite class	有定类	7.5.2
flap	闪音	3.3.2
foregrounding	突出, 前景化	16.3
foreign language teaching	外语教学	14.1.2, I.1
form	形式	8.2.2
form word	形式词	5.2.3.2
formative	构形成分, 构词成分	5.3.3
free morpheme	自由语素	5.3.1, 6.2.1.3
free root morpheme	自由词根语素	5.3.2
free variation	自由变异	4.2.2
fricative	(摩)擦音	3.3.2, 4.2.4, 4.2.5
frictionless continuant	无摩擦持续音	
function	功能	7.3.4, 7.5.3
function labels	功能标记	7.3.1
function of language	语言功能	1.4
function word	功能词	6.2.3.2
functional linguistics	功能语言学	II.5.1
functional sentence perspective (FSP)	功能性句展示成分	II.2.3
functional universal	功能普遍现象	13.3.1

functor	功能成分, 功能词	6.2.3.2
fusion	融合	10.2.3, 10.4.2
fusional language	融合语言	12.2.4

G

gender	性	7.4, II.5.4
general linguistics	普通语言学	2.3
generative grammar	生成语法	II.4.5
geographical dialect	地理方言, 地区方言	11.2.1, 14.1.1
given information	已知信息	II.2.3, II.5.5
glottal	喉音	3.3, 4.2.4
glottal stop	喉塞音	3.2.2
government	支配(关系)	II.4.1
gradability	分等级性	8.4.2.2
gradual opposition	渐次对立	II.2.2
grammar	语法	14.4.2
grammatical analysis	语法分析	15.1
grammatical form	语法形式	I.3.3.1
grammatical function	语法功能	7.5.3
grammatical gender	语法的性	7.4.2
grammatical structure	语法结构	5.2.3
grammatical subject	语法主语	7.3.1
grammatical typology	语法类型学	12.2.3
grammatical word	语法词	6.2.3.2
grapheme	书写单位, 字素	9.3.1
graphemic system	标音系统	9.4
graphemics	标音法, 字位学	9.3
Greek alphabet	希腊字母	9.2.3, 9.4.3

H

Hamito-Semitic family	含-闪语系	12.1.3.3
head	中心成分, 中心词	7.2.3
High language	高级语言	14.2.3
hiragana	平假名	9.2.2
historical linguistics	历史语言学	11.2.2

holophrase	单词句	6.2.2.3
homonym	同音/形异义词	5.2.5
homonymy	同音/形异义(现象)	8.4.4
homophone	同音词	5.2.5, 9.2.2
homophony	同音(现象)	5.2.5
horizontal relation	链状关系	7.1.1
human-specific	人类特殊性	1.3.6
hyperbole	夸张法	16.2.4
hypercorrection	矫枉过正	1.4.4.2
hyponym	下义词	8.4.3
hyponymy	下义关系	8.4.3
hypotactic	主从结构的	7.6.4, 7.7.1

I

I-C analysis	直接成分分析法	7.2.2
iconic stage	图象阶段	9.1.1
ideational function	意念功能	1.2.4, 11.5.5
ideogram	意符,表意字	9.1.2, 9.3.2
ideolect	个人方言	1.1, 11.2.5
idiom	成语,习语	6.3
illocutionary act	言外行为	15.3
immediate constituent	直接成分	7.2.2
immediate constituent analysis	直接成分分析法	7.2.2
imperative	命令的,祈使语气	1.4.2, 7.5.3, 11.5.5
implicature	含意,言外之意	8.4.5.3
implosive	内破(裂)音,内爆发音	3.2.1
inanimate	无生命的	7.4.2
incorporating language	合成语	12.2.4
indefiniteness	不定性	8.5.4
indicative	陈述式,陈述语气	7.5.3
indirect object	间接宾语	7.3.3, 11.2.3
indirect speech act	间接言语行为	15.3.3
Indo-European family	印欧语系	12.1.3.3, 12.2.1
infinite number	不定数	6.2.3.4

infinitive	不定式, 原形(动词)	7.3.4, II.2.3
infinitive phrase	不定式短语	6.4.1.2, 7.5.2
inflecting language	屈折语	12.2.4
inflection	屈折(变化)	5.1.1, 6.2.3.4, 7.4.1, 7.4.3
inflectional	屈折的	5.3.3
inflectional affix	屈折词缀	5.1.1
informative	有信息的	1.4.3
innateness hypothesis	天赋假设	II.4.2
institutional linguistics	机制语言学	14.2
instrumental	工具(格)的	7.3.1
integrative test	综合型测试	I.5.4.1
intensifier	强调成分	6.2.3.2
interchangeability	互换性	1.3.6
interference	干扰	I.4.4.1
interjection	感叹词	6.2.3.4
interlanguage	过渡语言	I.4.2.2
internal authority	内部权威	14.1.1
international phonetic alphabet	国际音标	3.5.1, 9.2.3
interpersonal function	人际功能	I.2.4, II.5.5
interrogative	疑问(的)	1.4.4, 7.5.3
intonation	语调	4.4.4, 7.6.4
invariable word	不变词	6.2.3.1
invention	创造, 杜撰	10.2.1
inversion	倒置, 倒装(法)	6.2.3.4
IPA	国际音标	3.5.1, 9.2.3
irony	讽刺, 反话	16.2.4
isolated opposition	孤立对立	II.2.2
isolating language	孤立语	12.2.4
Item-and-Arrangement analysis	项目与配列分析(法)	5.3.2
Item-and-Process analysis	项目与变化分析(法)	5.3.2

J

juxtaposition	并列, 邻位	7.6.4
---------------	--------	-------

K

katakana	片假名	9.2.2
kernel sentence	核(心)句	II.4.3
kinds of meaning	意义种类	8.3
known information	已知信息	II.2.3

L

labial-velar	唇化软顎音	3.3.1
labiodental	唇齿音	3.3
LAD	语言习得机制	II.4.2
language	语言	1, 2.2.3
language acquisition	语言习得	II.4.2
language acquisition device	语言习得机制	II.4.2
language maintenance	语言维护	14.3.6
language planning	语言规划	14.2
language universal	语言普遍性	II.4.1
langue	语言	2.2.4, 2.2.6, II.1.3
lateral	边音, 旁流音	3.3.2
lateral approximant	边近似音	3.3.2
Latin alphabet	拉丁字母	9.2.3
Latin grammar	拉丁语法	7.4.3
lax vowel	松元音	4.4.1
length	长度, 音长	4.2.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.4
lexeme	词位, 词素	6.2.1, 2, 6.3, 6.4.1.2
lexical collocation	词汇搭配	7.7.2
lexical meaning	词汇意义	7.4.2, 8.3.1, 12.2.5
lexical morphology	词汇形态学	5.1
lexical word	词汇学的词	6.2.3.2
lexicogrammar	词汇语法	6.2.1.3
lexicology	词汇学	6.4

lexico	词汇,词典	6
liaison	连音,连续	6.2.1.1
linearity	线性(排列)	4.3
linguistic atlas	语言地图	11.2.1
linguistic behaviour	语言行为	2.2.6
linguistic competence	语言能力	1.2.3
linguistic context	上下文	8.2.4
linguistic determinism	语言决定论	13.2
linguistic potential	语言潜势	2.2.6
linguistic stylistics	语言文体学	2.4.3, 16.1
linguistic typology	语言类型学	12.2
linguistic universal	语言普遍性	13.3, II.4.2, II.4.5
linguistic relativity	语言相关性	13.2
linguistics	语言学	2, 16
loanblend	混合借词	10.2.9
loanshift	转移借词	10.2.9
loan translation	翻译借词	10.2.9
loanword	借词	10.2.9
locutionary act	言中行为	15.3
logical connection	逻辑关联	7.7.2
logical structure	逻辑结构	II.4.1
logical subject	逻辑主语	7.3.1
logographic writing	语标文字	2.2.1
London School	伦敦学派	II.5
long vowel	长元音	4.4.1
loss (of sound)	语音脱落	10.3.1
loudness	响度	4.2.1, II.1.3
Low Language	低级语言	14.2.3

M

machine translation	机器翻译	2.4.5
macro-functional	宏观功能的	I.2.4, II.5.5
main clause	主句	7.5.2
Malayo-Polynesian family	马来波利尼亚语	12.1.3.3
male speech	男性言语	11.2.3.1
manner of articulation	发音方法	3.3, 12.2.2

masculine	阳性	7.4.2
material	物质的(过程)	II.5.4, II.5.5
mathematical linguistics	数理语言学	2.4.5
maxim of quality	质量次则	15.5
maxim of quantity	数量次则	15.5
maxim of relevance	相关次则	15.5
maxim of manner	方式次则	15.5
maximum free form	最大自由形式	6.2.2.3
meaning	意义	1.3, 7.1.1, 14.4.1, 15.1, 15.2, II.5.2, II.5.3
meaning shift	意义转移	10.5.3
meaning potential	意义潜势	I.3.3.3.2, II.5.5
mechanism	机制	8.2.3
mental process	思维过程	II.5.4, II.5.5
metanalysis	再分化	10.2.6
metathesis	换位(作用)	10.3.3
meter	韵律	16.2.1
minimal pair	最小对立体	4.2.1
minimum free form	最小自由形式	6.2.2.3
mode of discourse	话语方式	11.3.2
modality	情态(范畴)	II.5.5
modification	修饰	16.2.3
modifier	修饰成分, 修饰语	7.2.4.2, 7.3.4
monomorphemic word	单语素词	5.3.1
monophonemic	单音位的	5.2.3
monophthong	单元音	3.4.2
monosyllabic word	单音节词	4.4.2, 5.2.3
Mood	语气	II.5.4, II.5.5
morpheme	词素, 语素, 形素	5.6.2, 7.2.1, 9.2.1
morphemic structure	语素结构	5.2.3
morphology	形态学, 词法	2.3.3, 5, 6.1
morphonemics	形态音位学	5.4
morphonology	形态音位学	5.4
morphophonemic rule	形态音位规则	II.4.3
morphophonemics	形态音位学	5.4
morphophonology	形态音位学	5.4
mother tongue	母语, 本族语	I.2.3

multilateral opposition	多边对立	II.2.2
multilingualism	多语制,多语现象	14.2.2.5

N

Narrow Romic	严式罗密克音标	3.5.2
narrow transcription	严式标音	3.5.2
narrowing	词义缩小	10.5.2
nasal	鼻音	3.2.3.2, 3.3.2, 4.2.2, 4.2.4
nasal stop	鼻塞音	3.3.2
nasalization	鼻音化	II.2.2
national language	国语	14.2.2
natural gender	自然性	7.4.2
negation	否定,否定结构	6.2.3.4, 10.4.2
negative marker	否定标记	6.2.3.4
negative transfer	负移转	I.4.4.1
negative transformation	否定转换	4.3.1, II.4.4
neutralization	中立化	4.3.1
neuter	中性	7.4.2
neutralizable opposition	可中立对立	II.2.2
new information	新信息	II.2.3, I.5.5
new stylistics	新文体学	16.1
nominal clause	名词性从句	7.6.3
nominal phrase	名词性短语	7.2.2
nominative (case)	主格	7.3.1, 7.4.3
nondistinctive sound	非区别性语音	4.1
nonfinite clause	非限定分句	7.5.2
nonperformative sentence	非言语行为句	15.3
non-simple sentence	非简单句	7.5.3
nontone language	非声调语言	12.2.2
notional-functional syllabus	意念功能教学大纲	I.3.3.3
noun	名词	4.4.2.2, 6.2.3, 7.3.1, 7.3.4, 7.4
noun-like	似名词的	4.4.2.1

0

object	宾语	7.3, II.2.3
objective case	宾格	10.4.2
objectivity	客观性	2.1
occupational dialect	职业方言	14.1.1
official language	官方语言	14.2.3
onomatopoeic word	拟声词	1.3.1
onset	节首辅音	4.4
open class	开放类, 无限类	6.2.3.3
open syllable	开音节	4.4.1
optative	希求式	7.5.3
oral	口头的	4.2.4
oral stop	口阻塞音	3.3.2
origin of language	语言起源	1.5
orthography	正字法	3.5
overgeneralization	过分法则化	1.4.4.2
overstatement	大话, 言过其实	16.2.4

P

palatal	腭音, 舌面中音	3.3.1
palato-alveolar	腭齿龈音	3.3
paradigm	聚合体	5.1.1, 6.2.3.1, 7.4.5
paradigmatic relation	纵聚合关系	7.1.2, 7.1.3
parallelism	并行关系, 对句法	16.3.2
paratactic	并列的	7.6.4, 7.7.1
parole	言语	6.2.3.4, II.1.3
part of speech	词类	6.2.3.4, 15.4.1
particle	小(品)词, 语助词	6.2.3.4
participial phrase	分词短语	7.5.2
participant	参与者	II.5.4
passive articulator	被动发音器官	3.2.3.3
passive transformation	被动转换	6.3.1, 7.3.3, II.4.4
patient	被动格	7.3.1
pattern congruity	模式一致性, 同型性	4.2.5

patterning	制定模式	16.3.3
pause	停顿	16.2.1
peak	(节)峰	4.4
penultimate	倒数第二音节	4.4.2.1
performance	语言运用	2.2.5, 2.2.6, I.2.3, I.2.5
performance test	语言运用测试	I.5.5
performative	言语行为(功能)	1.4.7
performative sentence	言语行为句	15.3
performative verb	言语行为动词	15.5
perlocutionary act	言后行为	15.3
person	人称	6.3.1, II.5.4
phatic	寒暄的, 交感的	1.4.1
phatic communion	寒暄交谈, 交感性谈话	II.5.2
phoneme	音位, 音素	3.5.2, 4, 5.2.2, 5.4, 9.3.2, 9.4.1, II.2.1, II.2.2, II.5.3
phonetic similarity	语音相似性	4.2.4
phonetic typology	语音类型学	12.2.1
phonetics	语音学	2.3.1, 3.4.1, II.1, 3
phonological structure	音位结构	5.2.3
phonological system	音位系统	9.4.1
phonology	音系学	2.3.2, 4, 5.4, II.1.3, II.2.2
phonotactics	音位结构学	4.4.1
phrasal lexeme	短语词素, 短语词汇单位	6.3
phrasal verb	短语动词	6.2.3.4
phrase	短语	4.4.2.1, 6.3, 7.2.1, 7.5.1
phrase structure rule	短语结构规则	II.4.3
pictogram	形符, 图画字	9.1.2
pidgin	洋泾浜, 不纯正外语	11.2.3.2
pitch	音高, 声调高低	3.2.2, 4.2.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 11.2.3.2, II.1.3
pitch contrast	音高对比	9.4.1

pitch direction	音高方向	4.4.4
place of articulation	发音部位	3.3, 12.2.2
plosive	破裂音, 爆发音	3.2.1, 3.3.2, 4.2, 12.3.2
plosiveness	爆发性	4.3
plural	复数	7.4.1
plurality	复数形式	5.2.4
polymorphemic word	多语素词	5.3.1, 6.2.1,
polysemy	多义性, 多义现象	8.4.4
polysynthetic language	多式综合语	12.2.4
positional relation	位置关系	7.1.1
positive transfer	正移转	1.4.4.1
possessive	所有的, 属有的	6.2.3.2
postposed preposition	后置介词	10.4.2
pragmatic approach	语用方法	8.3.3
pragmatics	语用学	15
Prague School	布拉格学派	4.3.1, II.2, II.5.4
predicate	谓语	7.3.2, 7.4, 7.5, 8.5.2
predicate construction	谓语结构	7.2.3.2
predication	谓语化, 述谓	8.5.2
predication analysis	述谓分析	8.5.2
preposition	介词, 前置词	6.2.3, 6.4.1.2, 7.4.3, 7.4.5, 1.2.1
prepositional phrase	介词短语	7.2.3.2
prescriptive	规定式	2.2.2
prescriptive grammar	规定语法	15.4.2
presequence	前系列	15.4.3
presupposition	前提	8.4.5.2
privative opposition	表非对立, 表缺对立	II.2.2
pro-adverb	代付词	6.2.3.2
process	过程	II.5.4
productivity	多产性	1.3.3
proficiency test	水平测试	1.5.2
pro-form	代词形式, 替代形式	6.2.3.4
pronoun	代名词	6.2.3, 7.3.4, 7.4, II.1.3
pronunciation	发音	15.4.1
proportional opposition	部分对立	II.2.2
prosody	韵律学, 超音质成分	16.2.1

pro-word	替代词	6.2.3.2
psycholinguistics	心理语言学	2.4.4
psychological subject	心理主语	7.3.1
punctuation	标点符号	3.6.4

Q

quality	音值	4.2.1
quantifier	数量词	6.2.3.2
question	疑问(句)	4.4.4, 7.5.3
question transformation	疑问句转换	II.4.4

R

rank	级	II.5.4
realization	体现,具体化	2.2.4
rebus principle	字谜原则	9.1.2
Received Pronunciation	标准发音	3.3.1
recursiveness	递归性	7.6.3
reduplication	重叠,重复	5.4.2
reference	所指,参照	7.7.2, 8.2.2, 8.4, 9.3.2
referent	所指事物,参考对象	8.2.2
reflected meaning	反映意义	8.3.2
reflexive	反身的,反身代词	8.4.2.3
regional dialect	地域方言	4.2.1
register	语域,使用域	11.1, 11.3, 11.4, 14.3.2
relational component	关系成分	8.5.3
relational opposition	关系对立	8.4.2.3
relational process	关系过程	II.5.4
relative	关系的,关系词	6.2.3.2
relative clause	关系分句,关系从句	7.6.3
relative pronoun	关系代词	10.4.2
relative uninteruptibility	相对的非间断性	6.2.2.2
reliability	信度	I.5.3
repertoire	语库	14.2.3
reputation	威信	14.3.2
restricted code	限制性代码	14.3.4

restricted language	限制性语言	11.3.1
Rheme	述位	II.2.3, II.5.5
rhetorical question	反问	1.4.4
rhyme	韵(脚)	16.2.1
rhythm	韵律, 节奏	4.4.2.2
rising tone	升调	4.4.4
role	角色	14.3.1, II.5.4, II.5.5
Roman alphabet	罗马字母	9.2.1
Romance language	罗曼语	12.2.1
root	词根	5.1.2.1, 5.3.2, 5.3.4, 6.2.1.2
root morpheme	词根语素	5.3.2

S

Sapir-Whorf hypothesis	萨丕尔-沃夫假说	13.2
scale of delicacy	精密阶	II.5.4
segment	音段	4.4
semantic analysis	语义分析	8.5
semantic triangle	语义三角	8.2.2
semantic typology	语义类型学	12.2.5
semantics	语义学	2.3.5, 8, 15.1, II.4.1
semiotics	符号学	13.1.2
semi-vowel	半元音	3.3.2
sense	意义	8.4
sense relationship	意义关系	8.4
sentence	句	6.2.1.3, 7.1.3, 7.2.1, 7.5.3, 15.1, II.1.3, II.4.5, II.5.3
sentence pattern	句型	I.2.3
sentence stress	句(子)重音	4.4.2.2
sentence structure	句(子)结构	7
sentence type	句式, 句型	4.4.4, 7.5.3
sentential connection	句子关系	7.7.1
seriation	系列性	16.2.3
sibilant	摩擦音	3.3.2
sign	符号	II.1.1

signification	词义	II.1.3
signified	所指, 受指	8.2.2, 13.1.1, 13.2.2, II.1.1
signifier	能指, 施指	8.2.2, 13.1.1, 13.2.2, II.1.1
simple sentence	简单句	7.5.3
singular	单数	7.4.1
Sino-Tibetan family	汉藏语系	12.1.3.3
situational category	情景范畴	11.2.6
situational context	情景语境	8.2.4
situational syllabus	情景教学大纲	13.3.2
Slavic alphabet	斯拉夫字母	9.2.3
social dialect	社会方言	11.2.3
social meaning	社会意义	8.3.2
sociolinguistics	社会语言学	2.4.2, 14.1
sound	语音	1.3
sound loss	语音脱落	10.3.1
sound pattern	语音模式	16.2.1
sound writing system	语音书写系统	9.2.3
speech	言语	2.2.1, 9.4
speech act	言语行为	15.3, 16.1, II.5.5
speech community	言语社团	2.2.3, 2.2.4, 11.2.6, 13.3.2, 14.2.1, 14.2.3, 14.3.2
speech organ	言语器官	3.2
speech recognition	言语识别	2.4.5
speech sound	(言语)语音	3.1, 3.3.5, 4.1
speech synthesis	言语合成	2.4.5
spelling	拼写, 拼法	15.4.1
split infinitive	分裂的不定式	2.2.2, 10.4.2, 1.2.1
stability	稳定性	6.2.2.1
standard dialect	标准方言	11.2.4, 14.2.1
standard English	标准英语	11.2.3.2
standard language	标准语	14.2.1, 14.2.2, 14.3.2
standardization	标准化	15.4.1
statement	陈述	1.4.4, 4.4.4, 7.5.3
static linguistics	静态语言学	II.1.4

stem	词干	5.1.1, 5.1.2, 2, 5.3.4
stem-formative	构词干成分	5.3.4
stimulus-response	刺激—反应	I.2.2, II.3.3
stress	重音, 重读	4.4.2, 16.2.1
stress-timed language	重音拍子语	4.4.2.2, 4.4.4
structural grammar	结构语法	II.3.2, II.3.3, II.4.5
structural meaning	结构意义	8.3.1, 12.2.5
structural syllabus	结构教学大纲	I.3.3.1
structuralist	结构主义语言学家	16.2, II.4.5
structuralist grammar	结构主义语法	I.2.2
structuralist linguistics	结构主义语言学	II.2.2
structure	结构	7.5.3
stylistic linguistics	文体语言学	2.4.3
subject	主语	7.3, 7.4, 7.5, II.2.3
subgrammar	次语法	14.3.2
sublanguage	次语言	11.1
subordinate bilingualism	从属双语现象	14.2.2.5
subordinate clause	从句	7.5.2
subordinate construction	从属结构	7.2.4, 7.6.4
subordinate predication	从属述谓	8.5.2
subordination	主从关系	7.2.4
substitutability	替换性	7.1.2
substitution	替代(作用)	7.7.2
superordinate	上座标词	8.4.3
suprasegmental phonology	超语段音位学	4.4
surface structure	表层结构	I.2.3, II.4.3
syllabary	音节文字, 音节表	9.1.3, 9.2.2, 9.4.3
syllabic structure	音节结构	4.4, 5.2.3
syllabic writing	音节文字	2.2.1, 9.1.3, 9.2.2, 9.3.2
syllable	音节	4.4.1
syllable length	音节长度	16.2.1
syllabus	教学大纲	I.3
symbol	符号, 语符	8.2.2
symbolic	符号的	1.2
symmetric	对称的	8.4.2.3
synchronic	共时的	2.2.3, II.1.4
synchrony	共时性	II.1.4

synchronic linguistics	共时语言学	11.2.2, 12.2, II.1.4
synonymy	同义(现象)	8.4.1
syntactic class	句法类	4.4.2
syntactic function	句法功能	7.3
syntactic relation	句法关系	7.1
syntagmatic phonology	结构段音系学	4.4.1
syntagmatic relation	结构关系,(横)组合关系	7.1.1, 7.1.3
system	系统	II.5.1, II.5.4
systemic linguistics	系统语言学	II.5.1
systemic-functional linguistics	系统功能语言学	I.2.4
systemic-functionalist	系统功能语言学家	16.2
systemic grammar	系统语法	II.5.4

T

tag question	反意问句,附加疑问	4.4.4, 7.3.1
tap	一次接触音	3.3.2
temporal dialect	时间方言	11.2.2
tenor of discourse	话语意旨	11.3.3
tense	时态	5.1.1, 6.3.1, 7.4, 8.5.4, II.5.4
tense vowel	紧元音	4.4.1
testing	测试	I.5
text	篇章,语篇	16.2
textlinguistics	语篇语言学	7.7
textual function	语篇功能	I.2.4, II.5.5
TG grammar	转换生成语法	16.2, II.4
thematic meaning	主位意义	8.3.2
Theme	主位	7.3.1, II.2.3, II.5.5
thought	思想	13
token	标记,符号	6.2.3.2
tone	声调,音调	4.4.3, 9.4.1
tone language	声调语言	4.4.3, 12.2.2
traditional grammar	传统语法	I.2.1, II.3.4
transfer	移转	I.4.4.1
transformational-generative	转换生成语法	16.2, II.4

grammar		
transformational-generative linguistics	转换生成语言学	II.2.3
transformational rule	转换规则	I.2.3, II.4.3, II.4.4, II.4.5
transitive	及物的	8.4.2.3, 8.4.3
transitivity system	及物性系统	II.5.4, II.5.5
tree diagram	树形图	7.2.2, II.4.3
trill	颤音	3.3.2
trope	转喻, 隐喻	16.2.4
turn	轮转	15.4.3
type	类型	6.2.3.3

U

unaspirated	不送气的	12.2.2
understatement	谨慎的陈述	16.2.4
universal grammar	普遍语法	I.2.3, II.4.1
utterance	话语, 表述	7.1.1, 15.1, 15.2, 15.4, II.1.3, II.4.5

V

validity	效度	I.5.3.1
variable word	可变化词	6.2.3.1
variety	语体, 变体	11.1, 14.3.2
velar	软腭音	3.3, 4.2.4, 12.2.2
verb	动词	4.4.2.2, 6.2.3, 7.3, 7.4, II.2.3, II.5.2
verbal phrase	动词短语	7.1.3.1, 7.4
verbal process	言语过程	II.5.4
vertical relation	选择关系	7.1.2
vocal cord	声带	3.2
vocal organ	发音器官	3.2
vocal tract	声道	3.2.3.3
voice	(语)态, 声	3.2.2, 4.2.5, 7.4
voiced consonant	浊辅音	II.2.2

voiced sound	浊音	3.2.2, 12.2.2
voiceless consonant	清辅音	4.2.3, 11.2.2
voiceless sound	清音	3.2.2, 12.2.2
voicelessness	清音, 无声	4.3
voicing	浊音化, 有声(化)	3.3.3
vowel	元音	3.2.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.3.3, 4.4.1

W

word	词	5.2.1, 5.2.5, 6.2, 7.5
word class	词类	5.1.2.2, 6.2.3.4, 7.4, 7.5.3
word group	词组	6.2.1.3, 7.5.1
word lexeme	词素	6.3
word order	词序, 语序	7.1.1, 7.4.3
word stress	词重音, 单词重音	4.4.2.1
word writing	表意文字	9.1.2
word writing system	表意文字系统	9.2
Word-and-Paradigm analysis	词和聚合体分析法	5.3.2
word-formation	词的形成	5.1
writing	文字	2.2.1, 9
writing system	文字系统	9.2

Y

yes-no question	是非问句, 一般疑问句	7.5.3
yes-no question transformation	是非问句转换	11.4.4